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586. London, UK. Buses 1997 (Dig). 60 minute programme by Dave Spencer starts in Oxford St, 15 mins July then remainder at Stratford bus stations and High St in Nov 1997.
 585. Manchester, UK Buses. Oct 97 (Dig). 60 min programme shot by Dave Spencer includes city centre, Wilmslow Rd, Chorlton cum Hardy and finishes at Bury bus station.
 584. Heart of the Pennines UK Buses. Oct 97 (Dig). The 1997 Nocturnal rally at Piece Hall, Halifax with an interesting collection of preserved vehicles some entered for the first time, seen arriving at the site, cab ride and free service.
 583. Merseyside, UK Buses. Oct 97 (Dig). Avoiding Liverpool city centre we visit St Helens where SLT has joined Cowie North Western then Birkenhead with rail replacement services by Mersey Pride plus other scenes outside the centre giving better variety.
 582. Cheshire, UK Buses. (Dig). Mainly shot in Oct 1997 by Dave Spencer. lasts 60 minutes visits Northwich, Widnes, Chester, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield, Widnes and in 1996 we recall the Warrington Bus War.
 581. Glasgow, Scotland. UK Buses. Oct 97 (Dig). 60 minute programme by Dave Spencer in Autumn sunshine featuring Saturday services in the city centre and bus station with Stagecoach and First Bus head to head.
 580. South Devon. UK Buses. Oct 97 (Dig). 60 minute programme by Dave Spencer starting in Exeter with frantic Friday rush hour mini bus scenes then Torquay and Plymouth with Saturday services.
 579. South West England, UK Buses. Sept 97 (Dig). Rally and running day scenes from Warminster Running Day in Wiltshire plus the 1997 Bristol Rally at the Science Museum, Wroughton near Swindon.
 578. Showbus Part 2. UK Bus Rally. Sept 97 (Dig). More arrivals at Duxford museum shot outside the grounds and then a review of parked buses in the afternoon plus filler material from the Bristol (Swindon) rally, lasts 60 mins.
 577. Showbus Part 1. UK Bus Rally. Sept 97 (Dig). Sunshine blessed the arrival of vehicles in this 60 minute programme shot by Dave Spencer with views on and off site covering the earlier arrivals.
 576. Lathalmond, Scottish Bus Museum. Sept 1997 Buses. (Dig). Open weekend at this superb museum with all the display areas and workshops together with free bus services within the museum featuring also the Sunday road run departures.
 565. Southport/Liverpool, UK Buses. (Dig) August 1997. 60 minute presentation by Dave Spencer almost half in Southport with open topers even operating the park & ride service. Liverpool new city routings and Garston village.
 561. Isle of Wight UK Buses. (Dig). June 1997. Filmed by Dave Spencer with scenes in Newport, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Yarmouth. Southern Vectis always a popular operator well covered in this 60 minute video.
 560. North Wales. UK Buses 1997. (Dig). Video by Dave Spencer shot 14.6.97 covering Crosville and independents at Prestatyn, Rhyl, Llandudno, Bangor and Carnarvon, includes Silver Star.

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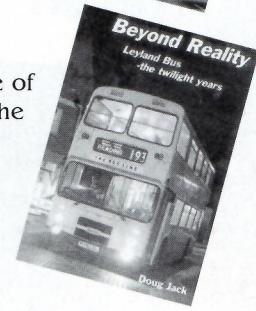
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Seen last August on a Lincoln-Grantham working and passing through Barkston, is Road Car 601 (B501 FFW), an ECW-bodied Leyland Olympian — one of only three of this combination ever operated in this Atlantean-dominated fleet. It is fitted with coach seats.

KEVIN LANE



BUSES

Volume 50 No 514 January 1998

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 Models, videos and books for Christmas

Pictureview
 Some less common single-deckers

Preservation
 An event on the Isle of Wight

You write
 Your thoughts on Arriva

Fleetline farewell

First generation rear-engined double-deckers are disappearing; West Midlands disposed of its last Fleetlines in November

Citybus low-floor trials
 More low-floor double-deckers for Hong Kong

Cowboys

JOHN CASH studies this abusive term of the deregulated era

Open-top surgery

What do you do with tired old double-deck motorway coaches? London Pride knows, and PHILIP LAMB has been finding out

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Cover:

Fleetline operation by Travel West Midlands ended on 1 November, 1992, destination blinds removed, leaves Washwood Heath depot for the last time.

JOHN ROBINSON

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FEATURES
 NEWS

Is there a new realism abroad in the bus industry? Is there a realisation that simply putting new low-floor buses on to routes, even entering into Quality Partnerships, by themselves will not bring passengers flooding back?

This year's CPT Conference (report pp6-7) was remarkable for the fact that the 'quality' issue was looked at from the passenger's point of view, rather than simply from the steps the industry had taken. How could public transport managers convince people to use a product they didn't use themselves?, asked Professor Carmen Hass-Klau of the Environmental Transport Planning consultancy.

As the editor of a certain renowned journal covering road passenger transport said recently to the Scottish branch of the Omnibus Society, the bus industry is currently at a crossroads; it has all to play for under the new Government and in light of the current concerns about traffic levels and pollution. Yet it is not a foregone conclusion that it will win through; while the opportunities are there to be grasped, like never before, they could still slip through the industry's collective fingers if it doesn't make the most of them.

The industry, let it be said, has already done a lot but in all honesty it is not yet bearing fruit. That doesn't mean that all its recent efforts have been misdirected, it just means there's still a very long way to go. Passenger decline is slowing, but is this just because we have now reached the point where the passengers that are left are the ones who have no choice and can't vote with their feet? The last dribs and drabs of decline have to be stemmed, then we have to see the decline reversed. It won't happen overnight; no matter what we do, the world won't suddenly wake up one morning and say, 'I think I'll go to work on the bus today'.

Yet something has to happen to make millions of individuals throughout the country come to that very decision, one at a time, before the bus industry can have a measurable effect. Those millions of individuals are all clamouring for Something to be Done, and need to be made to realise that they are the ones who will have to do it. They will have to decide, individually, to leave the car behind and get on the bus.

And when each individual makes that decision, the quality of service has to be such that they will do it again tomorrow. And the day after. You can put low floor buses on till you're blue in the face, you can paint every bus in the country the same colour — or not — and give them as many fancy names as you like, but something has to create a change of individual attitudes before any of it has any real meaning.

That's the challenge. By all means let's continue to invest in quality for that time, which will have to come unless we're all going to choke to death or fill every square metre of road space with stationary cars. Maybe getting more industry managers to use buses (and use them daily, for real journeys, not just go out for a ride on them from time to time) may begin to focus minds on the real issues which have made so many millions of passengers vote with their feet over the last 40 years.

STEPHEN MORRIS

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers from all of us at *Buses* and Ian Allan Publishing

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NEWS NEWS NEWS

this month's news stories

CPT conference 1998 — operating for quality

Although the Confederation of Passenger Transport has stated it would prefer to move away from a national conference, towards smaller regional seminars, each annual president seems to take the view that he should not be the one to kill it off. This year (1997) the president is FirstBus chief executive Moir Lockhead, who held his conference in Glasgow, and we understand next year's president, David Humphrey, managing director of London United, also looks forward to hosting a conference, in London.

One can sympathise to some extent with CPT's logic of smaller seminars; at the same time the CPT conference now is essentially a one-day affair, rather than the lengthy bashes of former days, with a tightly focussed programme giving the industry a useful collective forum.

This year's in particular seemed pertinent; its theme was 'operating for quality', and for once the telescope was turned round so that instead of the industry patting itself on the back for all its quality initiatives such as low floor buses and DiPTAC seat spacing, several speakers focussed on quality as perceived by the passenger. This is a more daunting way for the industry to look at things, but the conference was permeated by realism. It is going to take a lot more than new buses on certain corridors to effect a serious modal shift in favour of the bus, as some of the speakers were to point out.

Government hints to the future

After an opening address by the president, in which he pleaded with the Government not to unpick the whole of the present deregulated regime or 'be tempted to introduce legislation that makes us all start again', but also warned of the danger of letting stability turn into stagnation, Transport Minister Dr Gavin Strang spoke to the conference.

The Government's vision was, he said, of a strong economy but with a sustainable environment, towards which aim transport was important. The forthcoming White Paper, he maintained, was the first major statement on transport for some 20 years and 'integration' was a key manifesto commitment. There had been 5,000 responses to the consultation process, and he confirmed that bus regulation was one of the issues under review. The Government was particularly keen, he said, to promote the bus which was responsible for two-thirds of all public transport journeys, but lessons had to be learned from its steady decline. 'Making services more attractive is only part of the answer', he said. He was optimistic for the future of the bus, where decline was slowing, vehicle kilometres were rising, there had been good marketing initiatives and there was £1/4billion investment a year, but there was room to do more. Keeping customers happy and attracting new ones were essential objectives.

On the integration front, more needed to be done on through ticketing and co-ordinating of timetables

between bus and rail. However integration also extended to the matching of supply and demand for transport; 'We can't continue to build roads', he said, so more needed to be done to manage demand and restrict access, while innovation was needed to make better use of existing road capacity.

The third level of integration, according to Dr Strang, was between transport policy with policy on other matters such as health, education and land use. Taxation would continue to be a means of meeting the objective to hold CO₂ emissions at 1990 levels and 'officials are working with the industry' on the vexed question of fuel duty rebate for local buses. There was growing recognition of the need to reduce car dependency and better infrastructure was needed to encourage the use of other modes, including walking and cycling as well as public transport. He hinted at the possibility of creating new revenue streams for public transport from non-residential parking charges.

Radical measures

Two of the following speakers chose to look at quality from the passenger's perspective, and both concluded that there was still a great deal of work to be done. Professor Jose Manuel Viegas, chief executive of a Portuguese consultancy involving the Lisbon underground and Orpoto Public Transport Company, was concerned that there was plenty of talk about quality in public transport but not a lot was being done, and expectations were low. He considered that only 20-25% of operators were actually working towards quality, rather than making noises about it for the sake of shareholders and local communities. Quality had to be looked at from the output rather than the input end.

There had to be measurement of quality both at the resources level within the operator and also at customer satisfaction level. In a regulated regime there were usually contracts placed for the supply of public transport, which included general quality requirements, but these were usually set too low for fear that operators would not be able to deliver a higher level and there were inadequate means of enforcement. Quality had to apply to the service delivered, not just the cleanliness of vehicles, he said, citing the example of Oslo where the bus operator had to pay for passengers to go by taxi if a bus was 10min late or more. In the first year it nearly crippled the operator, but by the second year it was having to pay out much less.

There was scope for a bolder look at quality in urban public transport, he suggested. How much dare users aspire to? Their level of aspiration was based on previous experience, and previous poor service lowered expectations, such that all the most demanding customers had deserted in favour of other modes and only the least demanding customers were left.

Diesel still best

Tests undertaken by the Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire on behalf of London Transport Buses have shown that gaseous fuels give very little environmental advantage over a Euro 2 diesel running on fully reformulated ultra-low-sulphur diesel (better known as City Diesel) with a continuously regenerating trap (CRT). As has

been reported before the CRT is a device fitted by exhaust manufacturer Eminox which combines a catalyst with a ceramic filter to take out particulates and convert hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide to water and carbon dioxide. It also has the effect of turning nitrogen oxide into nitrogen dioxide, which lowers

Emission (g/km)	CNG with oxidising catalyst	Euro 2	Euro 2 on City Diesel with CRT
Hydrocarbons	3.01	0.61	0.136
Carbon monoxide	0.66	1.29	0.202
Nitrogen Oxides	9.92	14.27	11.9
Particulates (PM ₁₀)	0.05	0.18	0.022
Carbon dioxide	1,344	1,323	1,281

the temperature at which carbon deposits building up in the filter are burnt up, enabling the filter to regenerate itself.

The tests were the first to be carried out in Millbrook's new Variable Temperature Emissions Chamber, which can simulate real-life operating conditions.

Complete vehicles are used, with the engine driving through transmission and tyres, and a drive cycle to represent LT route 159 (Brixton-Baker Street) was used. Five different double-deckers, including a Routemaster, were tested using different engine, fuel and after-treatment options. The use of City Diesel and CRT brought down emission levels on older buses to Euro 2 standards and eliminated visible smoke, while a Euro 2 vehicle so equipped produced results comparable or superior to CNG or LPG, without incurring any of the infrastructure costs. In particular the PM₁₀ particulate matter was half that of the gaseous fuels. Carbon dioxide levels were slightly lower for the Euro 2 diesel, while emissions of hydrocarbons were substantially higher for CNG than for the diesels. However tests did show that in the long periods standing idling in Oxford Street traffic could reduce the temperature of gases flowing through the CRT, and thereby lower its effectiveness, so adjustments were undertaken, such as lagging the exhaust pipe downstream of the CRT to reduce heat losses.

The only notable advantage in favour of CNG was the reduction in nitrogen oxides (NO_x). Though full results for LPG are not yet available, the table shows the results for CNG, Euro 2 on standard diesel and without aftertreatment and Euro 2 running on City Diesel and fitted with a CRT.

One way of recovering clients was to offer differentiated levels of service, he suggested. Doing something *really* different would cater for those willing to change modes, though this was a big challenge when all over Europe there was a move towards greater re-regulation which could preclude new types of service.

Innovations could include a computerised system using real time information, whereby an office worker could call the operator and ask for a call back say six minutes before his or her bus would arrive. Real time information at stops was a step in the right direction, but only gave you information when you actually got to the stop. Such systems could also be used to reserve a seat, using low-cost LCD displays.

Another suggestion was that to overcome the fear of walking home from the bus stop off a late-night bus, the bus could actually take the passenger home. Card readers could be provided at out-of-town stops for passengers to register their requirement to travel into town at night.

He also suggested a more radical approach to bus lanes. Where flows of buses were less than 25 buses per hour, cars would actually create a better flow of passengers through the same road space, he said. Technology could be used to close bus lanes to other traffic 50m ahead of the bus, using red and green lights, so that when there was no bus coming other traffic could make use of the available road space. Infrastructure would be expensive, he conceded, but not as expensive as building extra road capacity.

Professor Carmen Hass-Klau specialises in public transport systems at the University of Wuppertal and also runs Environmental Transport Planning, a consultancy in Brighton, and showed herself to be a dedicated public transport user. She developed similar themes to Prof Viegas. It wasn't just in Britain that quality was not a term readily associated with public transport, she said; throughout Europe, local public transport was seen as being for the poor, elderly, schoolkids, welfare cases and foreigners — and mainly for women.

Public transport had an image problem, she said. Its executives tend to travel by car, so how could they convince people to use a product they didn't use themselves? There was too much involvement in technicalities and not enough in daily details. There was little understanding of what passengers wanted and while schedules had become more demand-sensitive since the 1985 Transport Act they were still designed to suit bus companies. There was a limit to what a privatised industry could do without public investment, she said.

Higher frequencies and integrated ticketing were needed and integration between modes had to be guaranteed. She also asked why everything to do with public transport had to be dirty. Systems had to be made foolproof; she, as a professor of public transport, often found timetables and fare tables difficult to understand. Materials should be tested

on car users; if they could understand them then the material was good.

It was time to increase profits by taking customers from the car, not from other bus operators she said, warning that everything could be thrown away by not realising how big a change was needed.

A belated U-turn?

Highlight of the afternoon's proceedings was a typically entertaining yet thought-provoking talk from Steven Norris, public transport minister under the last Government and now director general of the Road Haulage Association and Chairman of Capital Citybus. He spoke with his usual remarkable mix of audacity and pragmatism, stating that the Tory Government was 'wrong to have burned every control in the bonfire of the 1985 Act'. He accepted the need for commercialisation — 'even the New Labour people accept that', he said. He welcomed the Quality Partnership initiative, of which he claimed authorship, and suggested a strengthening of the rôle of the Traffic Commissioners. His recipe included registration of competing services on quality partnerships only where they come in at the same level of quality, that 'creaming off' should not be allowed and that the Commissioners should have powers to force competing operators to bisect their headways to give better frequency. He also suggested that the Traffic Commissioners rather than the local authorities should have a statutory duty to procure or provide timetable information. They should come from commercial backgrounds, he suggested, rather than the the traditional route which favoured a military background.

He also suggested a return to the cross-subsidy principle so despised of the authors of the 1985 Act; there should be corridor or area agreements where operators accepted the need to share the high earning routes with the poor ones.

He too spoke of the perception of quality from the user's point of view. 'You have to understand convenience' he said; 'the journey doesn't begin at the bus stop'. He welcomed the merging of the Departments of Transport and the Environment and suggested that the planning system could be used to reduce the need to travel at all. One in ten journeys could be eliminated by teleworking, he said, and he pointed to the need to convert journeys to more sustainable modes. But light rapid transit was 'dead as a doornail' under present budgetary constraints and his message to local authorities was to forget it; 'it's too expensive and it won't work', he said. He was surprised that there had not been more guided busways, which were a much cheaper solution. Bus services had to be frequent and reliable, working on the 'TUAG' (turn up and go) principle even outside urban areas.

He concluded by asking for reform of the London bus tendering system. The current system was over-protective in the short term, yet too exposed in the long term while the cost per passenger mile was still not particularly cheap.

Rally calendar reminder

Rally organisers and museum representatives are reminded that material for inclusion in the *Buses 1998 Rally Calendar and Museum Guide*, included in our April issue, is needed by **17 February** at the latest. Please address all material to *Buses Rally Calendar and Museum Guide*, Coombelands House, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 1HY, or it can be faxed on 01932 854750.

The last shall be First . . .

Following Stagecoach and Arriva, the other one of the 'big three', FirstBus has now revealed its corporate livery. As shown below on a Greater Manchester Volvo B10BLE, it is predominantly off-white, with a dark blue skirt surmounted by a magenta band with a curved device intercepting the skirt and band within the wheelbase.

However the new livery is to be applied only to low-floor buses and double-deckers with the corporate interior; other vehicles, including new minibuses, will retain existing liveries. A new First identity is to replace the existing FirstBus name; First is to be the new trading name while the group itself is to be renamed FirstGroup, assuming the change is ratified by shareholders at an extraordinary general meeting on 23 December.

The change to FirstGroup reflects the fact that the group's portfolio is now wider than buses, encompassing trains and, again subject to shareholders' agreement and completion of the due diligence procedure, including a majority shareholding in Bristol International Airport. Bristol City Council, which owns the airport, is currently selling a 51% share in it.

On the buses, local managers are free to retain existing brand names — or indeed to introduce new ones — which will be carried over the front wheels as a subsidiary branding to First, with the *f* symbol. Buses retaining existing liveries will also carry First branding which will carry greater prominence over the local company name. At present managers are reviewing names for their local businesses.

. . . and First will be first —

with low-floor artics

FirstBus has announced an order worth £80 million for new buses for the April 1998–October 1999 period. Most interesting are 40 low-floor articulated buses, to be bodied by Wright on Volvo chassis, which are to be used in urban areas, expected to include Glasgow and Manchester. These represent the first volume order for articulated buses in Britain and the first low-floor ones. These are due for delivery next summer.

Indeed Wright has gained the group's entire full-size single-deck orders, comprising 140 Volvos and 170 Scania, giving Wrights a total of 350 bodies for FirstBus — or FirstGroup, as it is likely to be by then — for the 18-month period. The rest of the orders call for 125 Volvo Olympians, 100 with Alexander bodies and 25 with Plaxton, while Dennis is to supply 100 Darts, of which 55 are to be bodied by Plaxton. The bodywork order for the other 45 has not yet been placed. Concluding the order for 680 buses are 105 Plaxton-bodied Mercedes minibuses. In addition 76 midibuses and 30 low-floor double-deckers will be needed by CentreWest for London Transport contracts.

The standard FirstBus specification includes double-glazing, climate-controlled heating and the new DiPTAC-compliant interior with extra legroom and high-quality seating. Electronic destination displays will also feature. In two and a half years, from spring 1997, FirstBus will have bought 1,700 new buses.



Citybus goes MAN

MAN has made a further inroad into a traditional British bus market; Citybus, Hong Kong, has ordered 61 complete SL262 single-deckers and a further 11 CR221LD low-floor double-deckers to follow the prototype currently in service (see p21).

Citybus has recently won franchises for 13 services to the new Chek Lap Kok airport and needs 202 new buses in time for the opening in April. These are to be met with 120 Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympians (70 11m buses, the rest 12m) and 30 10m Volvo B6s, to be bodied locally by Jit Luen Coachworks, in addition to 51 of the SL262s and

a one-off Dennis Trident, also described on p21.

At present Citybus has 64 production Dennis Tridents in build, with Alexander ALX500 bodywork, while 35 Northern Counties-bodied Volvo Olympians and 20 Volvo B6s, 10 each bodied by Plaxton and Alexander, are to follow. Two new engineering support facilities and two new depots are in build; Citybus expects to expand by 1,000 buses over the next few years.

The first of the MAN single-deckers is expected to be ready by Christmas, while the other 60 are now in build at Saltzgitter for

delivery in May. Meanwhile the Volgren-bodied MAN 24.350HOCLNR/NL-DD prototype is described by Citybus as 'a very impressive bus'. A second prototype is being bodied by Berkhof, which is to be evaluated on the test track at Munich before shipment, to be followed by 10 production double-deckers, also to be bodied by Berkhof and expected before the end of 1998.

Competition comes to the Isle of Man

The Isle of Man, where the main operator Isle of Man Transport has so far enjoyed a monopoly of bus services, has had its first taste of competition in modern times. Coach operator Tours (IoM) has been granted a licence to run a network of express services mirroring that introduced by IoMT in November, giving limited-stop commuter journeys from the major towns (Ramsey, Peel and Port Erin) into Douglas. Tours' service began on 1 December, and ran free of charge for the first week, a move mirrored by IoMT.

Tours is using coaches with seatbelts, whereas IoMT is using its new Marshall-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs, which are still waiting for the agreement for the new 'figure-of-eight' service network for which they were obtained. However an ex-Halton Lynx has also been used to cope with loads during the free running. One journey runs in the morning, with two return journeys in the evening on all services of both operators, and the routes are identical apart from the Douglas terminus and the Ramsey service; IoMT runs over the direct 'Mountain Road', while Tours uses the coast road via Laxey. IoMT has authorisation to use the coast road in adverse weather.

IoMT has appealed to the Traffic Commissioner against the granting of Tours' licence, which was expected to disrupt the Tours service. However it began as planned on 1 December.

Stage-tram?

South Yorkshire PTE has named Stagecoach as preferred bidder for the franchise to run Sheffield Supertram for the next 25 years. Stagecoach also has tramway interests in Portugal, and hopes to be able to improve the fortunes of the Sheffield system, which has made large losses ever since it opened, making it profitable 'in a couple of years'.

Stagecoach made a profit of £70.5 million on a turnover of £681.5 million in the six months up to 31 October.

Developments in tramways etc are covered more fully in our sister publication, *Tramways & Urban Transit*, which replaces *Light Rail & Modern Tramway* from the January issue.

Tramways & Urban Transit goes on sale the same day as *Buses*, 18 December. The magazine has a new look and yet more incisive, topical coverage of tramways and urban transit worldwide.

Green Line to continue

One aspect of Arriva's operations (see *Buses* December) which will be exempt from the new corporate scheme is Green Line. Green Line Travel is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Arriva Passenger Services, though its operations encompass other operators, including Beeline, a subsidiary of CentreWest and part of FirstBus, and Blazefield's Sovereign company which operates Green Line services from Stevenage. Other elements of Green Line's network are supplied by Arriva companies.

Indeed the Green Line livery has recently undergone a minor facelift, with new graphics, and three batches of vehicles are being delivered for operations, 10

DAF SB3000s with Plaxton Prima bodywork for The Shires (one of which was shown at Coach & Bus '97), eight similar vehicles for Maidstone & District and some unusual coach-seated low-floor DAF SB220s with Plaxton Prestige bodywork for the 724 (Heathrow-Harlow).

The Green Line name is well recognised particularly by incoming tourists, and ranks alongside National Express and London Transport as one of three names in the travel business most likely to be recognised by foreign tourists. The name is registered to prevent other users in the passenger transport field within 100 miles of London.



One of County Bus's new Green Line Plaxton Prestige-bodied DAF SB220LEs prior to delivery

Foline Dart

Wrights of Ballymena is now offering its Foline one-step concept on its Crusader body on the Dennis Dart SLF. The Foline system eliminates the 'gallery effect' towards the back of the low-floor buses with a gently-ramped floor and single low-rise step up to the rear section. It also adds structural strength at the potential weak point where the low-floor structure joins the higher rear end by incorporating a wedge-shaped section to carry the ramped floor.

The first is a 10.8m 41-seater for 35-vehicle fleet Universitybus, Hatfield. It has a 1.76° ramp and a single 180mm step into the rear section; DiPTAC currently allows 3° ramps. Shorter versions of the Crusader Foline are also available.

Universitybus currently runs 15 Wright-bodied vehicles, 11 of them Crusader-bodied Darts, and the new vehicle has been acquired with the help of a grant from Hertfordshire County Council for its 600 and 602 services between Watford, Hatfield and University of Hertfordshire campus sites.

Meanwhile the first 12m Foline buses, Renown-bodied Volvo B10BLEs, entered service on FirstBus Greater Manchester's upgraded GOLDService 600/601 service between Wigan and Leigh (once home to an earlier generation of Renowns, from AEC!) during November. Nine vehicles have joined the Wright Liberator-bodied Volvo B10Ls already on the service, all in a new ivory and blue livery — though this is likely to be short-lived with the introduction of FirstBus's corporate livery for low-floor buses with the new FirstBus interior. A further 12 Renowns are due for Greater Manchester.



Flights adds Central Coachways

Birmingham-based Flights Coaches has expanded again by taking over the Central Coachways operation of Travel West Midlands on 25 November. This is Flights' second takeover in recent months, following its acquisition of Bournemouth-based Excelsior in September.

Central Coachways, which trades as Central Liner, rose to prominence after being taken over by West Midlands PTE in the 1980s, when it ran a Birmingham-London express service, jointly with London Coaches in competition with National Express. It has also been used as a low-cost unit for winning tenders for bus services at different times. More recently however its fleet of 17 coaches, Bovas, Ikarus-bodied Volvos and Van Hool-bodied DAFs, based at Walsall, have been used on more conventional coach operations.

Flights now runs around 125 coaches and is the third biggest coach operator in Britain, after Shearings and Wallace Arnold. Central staff have transferred to Flights' base in Birmingham.

Bus people

Roger Bowker, who was chairman and managing director of Stagecoach East London and Stagecoach Selkent, has now gone to Sweden as chairman of Stagecoach Swebus. His new appointment took effect from 1 November. Roger Bowker came to Stagecoach as managing director of East London, a post he had held since East London was formed. Prior to that he had been managing director of Rossendale Transport, which he joined from Greater Manchester PTE, followed by Eastbourne Buses.

Tony Cox, chairman of Stagecoach West, assumes chairmanship of the London companies while their operations director **Barry Arnold** becomes managing director.

John Piper, managing director of Invictaway, the Arriva Group holding company for London & Country, Maidstone & District, Kentish Bus and Londonlinks, is to take early retirement in June 1998 and relinquished his post at Invictaway on 10 November, but continues to work for Arriva. After a long career in the bus industry, he became London & Country's engineering director in 1989 and became its joint managing director two years later. **Brian Jackson**, who was managing director of the Yorkshire Bus

Caetano buys coach operator

Salvador Caetano (UK) Ltd, the British importer of Caetano coachwork, is to acquire the entire share capital of Reliant Coaches of Ibstock from 9 January. Reliant has shared premises with Caetano at Heather, near Coalville in Leicestershire, since 1989 and the two have 'enjoyed a close working relationship'. Caetano promises that Reliant will be developed and will 'take advantage of new business opportunities as they arise'. Reliant will trade independently of its new parent company.

Subs up

UK subscription rates for *Buses* have had to increase slightly for 1998; the new one-year rate is £31.20, with two-year rates at £59. Overseas rates are unchanged (£43 for Europe and Eire, £45 for the rest of the world, first-class airmail subscription £54). Subscriptions for *Tramways & Urban Transit* are £28.80 per year or £59 for two years (£35/£66 Europe, £41/£77.50 rest of the world, £45/£85.50 first-class airmail).

group of Arriva (West Riding etc) is now managing director of Invictaway.

Brian Fisher, managing director of Plymouth Citybus, is president of the Omnibus Society for 1998. He will be giving his presidential address in London on 27 January (see 'Diary Dates').

Keith Howcroft has been appointed passenger services and planning executive at Greater Manchester PTE. He joins the PTE from Oldham MBC, where he was assistant director of the environmental services department.

Diary dates

1 January:
Friends of King Alfred Buses, Winchester & West Hants running day, based on Winchester Broadway. Event sponsored by *Buses and Classic Bus*.

27 January:
Omnibus Society presidential address. 'Westward Hoe' by Brian Fisher, managing director of Plymouth Citybus. London Transport headquarters, 55 Broadway, London, SW1 (above St James's Park Underground station), 18.45hrs.

The only authority map this month is unusual in being produced by **South Somerset** District Council rather than the county (tel: 01935 462651). From Pindar, it is of Yeovil and shows all roads, with those carrying a Southern National bus route in red and others in grey. Railways, cycleways, parks, walks and sites of interest are added. The rear contains a plan of the bus station, a frequency list for all services plus full timetables of town services. This is an excellent map, though it does show all-too-well the long-standing situation whereby this town of 40,000 folk has no local buses after 18.35 (none on a Sunday)!

Turning to operators, **Grampian Transport** has a redesigned system map (tel: 01224 650065). From FWT this utilises two different styles: a map of Aberdeen showing principal roads (those

having buses coloured green) with Park & Ride highlighted, the railway added and additional detail such as walks and parks; and a diagrammatic map with a colour for each route which, despite 20, works well because there are rarely more than four together and similar colours are kept apart.

Given that each route is numbered, the key on the latter is irrelevant, and as it could lead to confusion with anyone partially colour-blind, would have been better avoided. A blow-up of the city centre and a separate map for the six Night Bus Routes are added — though the latter shows how use of the 12-hour clock has led to a major error, as it specifically states that all services leave the centre at 12.09am, 1.09am and 2.10am 'every Friday and Saturday'. They don't: they run Saturday and Sunday, and I hope those turning up at 02.10 Friday get taxis and claim fares back! Is it

coincidence that (Stagecoach) Bluebird, which has its own night buses on the same days, and has vastly-superior timetables to Grampian's, has not fallen into that trap, making it quite clear that they run 'Sat/Sun mornings (Fri/Sat nights)'?

That having been said, this shows what can be achieved with two complementary map styles — though the loss of the previous frequency-chart is disappointing and, given the cover charge of 50p, Grampian should have printed something bigger so as to have retained it.

A new timetable for the London-Baldock

and therefore effectively limited-stop buses. A number of NX routes are now branded walk-on 'shuttles', and with these being added it made sense to become comprehensive by adding the remaining services. This has been achieved by sponsorship from the National Express Group and the timetables for those that require advance booking are printed on the rear of the map (and cross-referenced in the Index).

The map shows London services in red, Heathrow/Gatwick non-London services in blue, then, of those remaining, via Birmingham services in green and via Bristol in orange. That only leaves a tiny number, and they are shown grey. This scheme works well as there are rarely more than three colours together.

Rail maps usually show rails, not services, whereas bus maps usually show services

not roads — that is, one assumes that on any bus route one can more or less get on anywhere. This is quite different when NX services sometimes travel over 100 miles non-stop, and so these are shown with arrows as if the routes had 'gone underground' — a novel approach which avoids confusion.

It is clear from the map that this is not a network but a series of disjointed, partly-historical, networks, which rarely take one to anywhere that cannot be reached by rail, whilst omitting many places on the rail network. True, rail users must envy the seven-day patterns (without engineering works!) but NX is missing an opportunity of complementing, or integrating with, rail in the way many limited-stop buses (and, indeed, Citylink) do. Perhaps this is the reason the NX Guide itself abolished proper maps — it didn't want users to see what an odd network it really has outside Scotland!

Please note that at this stage this fascinating map will only be available with the GBBTT, which remains £11 post-free within Europe.

ON THE MAP

BARRY S DOE AFIMA, MCIT

Sovereign-operated 797 Green Line service is most interesting (tel: 0181-668 7261). An FWT-produced double-A4 length leaflet, it gives fares, a Zone 1 Tube map showing which central London stations are served and — a novel addition — miniature town-plans of Baldock, Hatfield, Hendon, Hitchin, Letchworth and Stevenage, showing the roads used in each, plus central London from Finchley Road to Victoria. This is a huge advance on a mere list of roads and something other operators using individual route-leaflets ought to consider emulating.

Finally, the February edition of the **Southern Vectis** Great Britain Bus Timetable will contain yet another loose-leaf map (tel: 01983 522456), the current one containing Britain's bus and rail systems (with blow-ups of areas containing the seven PTEs and South Wales), being complemented by a second, for National Express (NX). The GBBTT always contained Scottish Citylink routes as these are walk-on

JULIAN OSBORNE begins a new occasional series looking at the service element of bus services

Yes! No more long articles but some extra comments about service every so often. And many thanks to Birmingham City Transport for the inspiration for our title. The key word is 'service': I'm sure there's no company left that thinks it's 'extra' anyway!

One ground rule. I personally will be saying disproportionately little about my regular operators. It doesn't seem fair to focus continually on them with every journey a certainty for comment herein. So the generally excellent performance of Guildford & West Surrey, Speedlink Airport Services and London routes 105 and 111 will be mentioned only occasionally. In fact less often than it is in this first column, where the 105 makes what at first sight might appear a negative appearance — but read on!

This Heathrow to Greenford route has had a rather chequered history recently. In 1994 CentreWest replaced (good) its Metrobuses with bread vans (bad). It then lost the route under tendering to London & Country which took over with brand new Dart SLFs and some very exciting driving techniques. (Yes a Dennis Dart can stop dead, one centimetre behind the vehicle in front; yes it can race Concorde along the runway.) Within months they tired of this and handed the route and buses over to CentreWest anew.

Things got much better so it was a real surprise for me to be left at the stop one evening last June because the driver was overtaking another bus. However, the letter I received from CentreWest was a text book example of how to deal with a complaint, thanking me for my positive general comments about the 105, apologising for the incident, and assuring me that it would be followed up. I was left feeling much more warmly toward CentreWest than another company to whom I wrote a complimentary letter some time previously. It was answered rather pointedly by a delegatee of the addressee, who did not comment on one of my main points and, whilst accepting a suggested publicity change of mine, forgot to follow up as promised and wasn't terribly helpful when I

rang to enquire about it. So! a complaint engenders better feeling toward a company than a compliment! The 105 has incidentally changed hands yet again, still with the same batch of Dennis Darts.

The main point missed by my compliment responder was about a bus driver. My remarks about coach drivers were acknowledged but the bus driver was ignored. That won't happen here. This column will concentrate on the people who deliver customer service day in, day out but rarely get a mention. We hear all the time about new vehicles, new tickets, new interchanges, but comparatively rarely about the people who really make it all work — the drivers.

So much for scene setting. I want to make two specific comments and then begin in earnest in the next column.

- 1 As intimated in my last article I went on an Equus Customer Service training course. This was at the invitation of Trent and the most significant things about it were how like other industrial training courses I have attended (or run) over the years it was (who says you can't do this with bus crews?) and how impressive it was to see the commitment of Trent's management with the Ops Manager in the room virtually all day. No 'your management thinks this is a good idea' from the trainers and 'well why aren't they here?' from the trainees.
- 2 I have a feeling that I never say anything nice about London United. The two buses past my office are the regularly handed over 105 and London United's 111. This route comes to Heathrow via a very convoluted route from Kingston but it is nearly always bang on time. The 105 regardless of operator exhibits no discernible timetable but the 111 turns up as per the schedule almost always. This I find very reassuring — and impressive.

So there we are. More issues to come. Do write with your comments about customer service on buses — positive and negative and those grey areas where the best answer is difficult to spot like the famous Brighton dilemma of the flooded layby: do you pull in and soak people or stay out and make them jump the puddle?

After 65 years, Aldershot's bus station in The Grove, closed on 18 October last. However, all was not lost, because a new seven bay facility adjacent to the town's railway station opened the following morning, providing even better interchange facilities than before.

First vehicle to enter the new bus station was preserved ex-Aldershot & District Dennis Loline 357. This appropriate event took place courtesy of Neil Instraw, Operations Manager at Stagecoach Hants & Surrey, successors to the Traction Company, which has leased the site from Railtrack.

The previous site was originally owned by the Southern Railway. Aldershot & District signed a 42 year-lease in the sum of £100 per annum, with an option to extend the agreement for a further 21 years at the same fixed rate. After the initial lease expired in 1995, it continued on a yearly basis, pending the opening of the new bus station.

One picture shows an overview of the original site. The new facility has been built on the site of the railway goods sheds located between the railway and bus stations. The other depicts ex-Aldershot & District vehicles accompanying a Stagecoach Hants & Surrey Volvo Olympian on the new bus station's inaugural day.



A quarter of a century ago, the sight of a foreign-bodied coach in a British fleet was rare enough to be greeted with considerable excitement. How times change! In the forefront of this invasion was the leading Belgian coachbuilder Van Hool of Koningshooikt, which had been building bus and coach bodies since 1947, initially for the Benelux countries but later for a much wider market.

Surprisingly Van Hool's first offerings for Britain consisted of three bodies on Bedford chassis; a VAS5, a VAM70 and a VAL70. The VAS was, in truth, somewhat nondescript but the VAM and VAL had that all time classic body, the Vistadome.

Early in 1971 the VAL (RAR 690J) was sold along with the VAM to All Seasons of London W2 but it had moved to Home James of Liverpool by the time I first saw

THE FENTON FILE

Today we take foreign-built coaches for granted; it was not always so, as MIKE FENTON recalls

and photographed it in May 1973. Four years later, when seen for a second time, it was operating for Boulton's of Shropshire. Clearly the VAL was a survivor and 20 years on I was delighted to have the opportunity to photograph it yet again, this time at the 1997 Spalding Tulip Parade in the ownership of the appropriately named VAL's Classic Coaches Ltd of Chase Terrace, Staffordshire.

For completeness it should be stated that four other VALs are known to have been bodied by Van Hool; two right hand drive examples for Australia plus left hand drive versions for Belgium and for Holland.

With one of the first three Van Hool bodies for Britain, Bedford VAL70 RAR 690J is still in service. MIKE FENTON photographed it in May 1997.

News and views from the capital

JOHN ALDRIDGE

Leadership for London

Welcome, chaps! We don't know quite what you'll be like, but we'll be with you all the way. That seems to be the message from on high in LT to the government's proposals for a greater London authority (GLA), propounded in great detail in a 20-page A4 full-colour booklet issued by LT.

If you look at the present situation, since the abolition of the loved or hated (according to one's standpoint) Greater London Council, London has been virtually alone in world-class cities in having no one in overall charge, apart from a Government Minister. That is a rather strange, and probably undesirable situation. We have the GLC to thank for (in large measure) the successful Travelcard scheme and much else, and we have probably also cursed them for nonsenses such as the 'silent' DMS-type Fleetlines, encouragement towards setting up a new bus-building plant in Greater London, and some other silly ideas.

LT obviously has to be careful about what it says. If one accepts that some kind of new London-wide political body is inevitable, in view of the Government's large majority in the House of Commons, then LT must be seen to welcome it, at the same time no doubt putting forward some of its own hopes, wishes and aspirations.

But not only is there to be a GLA, there is also a proposed London Transport Authority (LTA). Its primary responsibility should be toward the travelling public, says LT, and it should apply consistent strategic co-ordination, planning and financial criteria across all modes of transport. LT looks forward to working with the LTA, it says.

But among its more strange proposals are that the LTA should have powers to operate services directly as necessary. It would also like the LTA to have control of public transport marketing, including fares and ticketing, and to have overall responsibility for London's strategic road system, especially roads used heavily by buses.

If you look beyond London to most of the cities that had a passenger transport authority, or its successor, you would have to agree that they did a good job. The same sort of job, that, with buses I thought LT was already doing. Do we really need another body as well? And when it talks of co-ordination, we seem to be back on that buzz word that is used so much but means so little.

User-friendly transport

Did you know that travelling by London bus is now easier, thanks to a new, award-winning bus information system? The design apparently works so well that more people are travelling by bus, according to LT marketing director Norman Cohen.

The new system was designed for LT by design consultancy Fitch and has won a DBA/Marketing Week Design Effectiveness Award. The system encompasses the redesign of everything from bus stops and stations to maps, timetables and posters, all with a new common visual identity, says LT.

I must confess that this revolution had gone un-noticed by me, except that I had seen the rather neat new aluminium bus stops that are being erected in many places.

On the subject of awards, Victoria Coach Station has received its second Charter Mark award from the Cabinet Office. The Charter Mark recognises public sector organisations who put users of their services first and is regarded as a 'great measure of customer satisfaction.' Apparently the assessors found the station 'lively, well organised and customer conscious.'

Stay of execution for 726

In 'In London' in September we commented on the proposal by LT to withdraw the 726, the former Green Line service which London Coaches runs on an orbital route from Dartford to Heathrow, and the fuss that ensued.

The November meeting of the Chartered Institute of Transport's Heathrow section was all about SWELTRAC, which is a sort of acronym for South West London Transport Conference, involving local authorities, transport operators and LT. There were to have been five similar organisations covering between them the whole of London, but SWELTRAC is the only one to survive.

One of the key items on SWELTRAC's agenda is something called 'Orbibus', a proposal for a dedicated bus service through a corridor taking in Croydon, Kingston, Feltham and Heathrow. There is concern at the time it takes by public transport from south London to the airport, and the number of changes involved. Orbibus would use high-quality, dedicated buses in a special livery with refinements like bus lanes and real-time information.

OK, we haven't got those refinements yet, but the concept of the bus route sounds remarkably like the western section of the 726, which runs fast between those

centres using purpose-built vehicles in a dedicated livery, and the similarity didn't escape our editor who, as secretary of the Heathrow section of CIT, raised the point. A consultant for SWELTRAC was defensive, and suggested the 726 was nothing like Orbibus, though its local authority spokesman admitted that, well, yes it was. However an LT representative there told us that in fact 726 has now had a reprieve of some 18 months, following some 1,600 letters in its support, though many of those, he told us, were from airline passengers who only used the service only once or twice a year.

Funnily enough that's how many of us use airports, and if Heathrow's aim is to get as many people to the airport as possible by public transport, then it needs to be accepted that many of those passengers will only be occasional. Nonetheless LT still felt it could use the resources it puts into the 726 more effectively elsewhere, which you could probably say about a lot of things. Indeed if one were very unkind, one might suggest the same applies on a much bigger scale to the Jubilee Line Extension.

But with the infrastructure improvements proposed and a frequency upgrade, the western half at least of 726 could surely become Orbibus.

Interchange at Feltham

Talking of SWELTRAC, one of its proposals which is very likely to see the light of day sooner rather than later, is a new interchange at Feltham station. Feltham used to have a rail-air connection, which was reckoned to be about the fastest way to get from London to the airport, given the fast service from Waterloo and the proximity of Feltham to the airport.

It was never very well-used, but perhaps the facts that (a) it was rather infrequent, (b) it used very unattractive and very high-floor Willowbrook-bodied Fords in a drab yellow livery, which needed only a dash of black to be identical to those used by the Coal Board, (c) it was never promoted properly and (d) though it could have been very useful

for airport staff, many of whom live in and around Feltham, BR saw it only as a service for rail passengers and refused to put on early morning journeys, may all have had something to do with that.

The new interchange will hopefully encourage greater use of the connectional facilities which the 285 could offer between Feltham station and the airport, though SWELTRAC is talking in terms of a new express rail-air link. The new interchange, replacing an unmitigated dump of a station, will be renamed Feltham Gateway, and is one of two proposed Gateway stations, the other to the north of the airport at Stockley Park, which would no doubt be served by the A10 'Heathrow Fast' service.

More tender variety

Not only are new tender awards still full of surprises but yet more are likely to follow in the months to come as LT is apparently going out to woo other operators — not necessarily in the London area — to encourage them to bid for London work. That probably explains why there are said to have been no fewer than six tenders put in for one route recently awarded.

The latest batch of awards — as briefly mentioned in December's main news pages — include two central London routes (211 and C1) awarded to a newcomer, or maybe one should call it an old operator returning. The newcomer is West Midlands Travel or Travel West Midlands, according to whose press release you read. It is to set up a new base somewhere in London, location as yet unspecified. London General is the loser of both routes.

The other, lesser, surprise is the win by Capital Citybus of two routes (76 and 259), both at present worked by Arriva Leaside. All told Capital Citybus is likely to need at least 30 new double-deckers for the two routes, which will bring its fleet up to more than 300. Twenty Seven more East Lancs-bodied Dennis Arrows are on order. The 259 at present runs Holborn Circus-Edmonton Green every day, albeit in shortened form at weekends, while the 76 (County Hall-Lea Valley Tesco) has no Sunday service. But proposals for changes to both routes are apparently about to go out to consultation, but as the new tenders are already awarded, no doubt the changes are really a foregone conclusion. And in case you think I am still harping on about this unreasonably, I note that the London Regional Passengers Committee feels that proposals it has made to LT have largely been ignored.

One cannot help speculating that the awards of at least some of these routes, and the trawl for newcomers, are intended to fire warning shots across the bows of the big groups. It might be quite wrong, indeed positively scurrilous, to think this, but that's inevitable when tender prices are not disclosed. On a brighter note, some of the recent awards are said not to have gone to the lowest tenderers, but to those offering a quality package.

The successful bids by WMT (or TWM) for 211 (Waterloo-Hammersmith) and C1 (Victoria-Kensington High Street) are particularly strange in being for seven years instead of the usual five. Was this what TWM insisted on, if it was to rejoin the London fray? What's more, though not

announced, I am told that both are gross cost contracts, something rare these days.

That of course could be partly because of the C1, which is a bit of a white elephant. You may recall it was the original central London minibus route, established when — some say — LT felt it had to be seen to do what other city operators elsewhere were doing. It began as Embankment-Kensington in 1986, worked by Optare CityPacers with high-backed seats and on-board music. They worked from the basement of Victoria Garage. The route has had a somewhat chequered career subsequently. For a time it went further east, to Waterloo Station. Later the route was shortened. At one time too there was a supplementary fare payable by Travelcard holders using the C1. In its present form it is one of those routes providing useful links and which would attract enormous influential opposition, yet which probably loses money.

Anyway, from next June, when the new contracts are due for implementation, it will gain new low-floor minibuses, expected to be Optare Solos, while 211 will gain new low-floor dual-door single-deckers. At present C1 is worked by long Metroriders, and 211 by Dennis Dart-Plaxtons. Total vehicle requirement on Mondays to Fridays is 26 operational buses, which I suppose is about the minimum number that would justify an outsider setting up a new operation.

The Capital Citybus contracts, by the way, start next March, which does not allow the company long to obtain 30 plus new double-deckers.

Other tender announcements include a win by Metroline Travel of 260 (Shepherd's Bush-North Finchley), a route at present operated by Armchair. Metroline Travel will use existing double-deckers (Titans or Metrobuses) at first, but will introduce new double-deckers in 1999. Again, this is a trifle odd, since it means buying new for a contract that has only four years to run. The announcement does not specify whether they will be low-floor, which presumably means they won't be!

Last but not least, London General has won a contract to continue running route 11 for a further five years, as now using Routemasters on Mondays to Fridays, and one-person double-deckers at weekends. That guarantees Routemaster operation until the end of May 2003!



Limebourne normally runs the 156 (Clapham Junction-Wimbledon) with Dennis Dart SLFs. When pressed an Optare MetroRider is sometimes substituted; but on 4 November the operator was really pressed and had to use a decidedly non-low-floor Dennis, this Berkhof-bodied Javelin from its coach fleet. It may not meet LT Schedule X, but at least it kept the service going.

STEPHEN MEREDITH

Freedom plea

Criticisms of individual route tendering have been made by Roger Bowker, as a parting shot before relinquishing his post as chairman of Stagecoach East London and Stagecoach Selkent in *Eastender*, the staff newsletter for the two companies. Mr Bowker, who is now chairman of Stagecoach Swebus (see 'Bus people', this issue) calls for a more

open system allowing the operator to be involved in the route-planning.

His views have been echoed by Stagecoach chairman Brian Souter, giving the annual London Transport lecture. Both men also mentioned recruitment difficulties and increases in fuel prices, which cannot be recouped through fares increases or higher tender prices.

In brief

Bus reliability worsened slightly in the three months to 12 September, according to the latest statistics. The funeral of Diana, Prince of Wales, major roadworks, localised flooding and demonstrations all adversely affected London bus services.

None of the 31 1993 Dennis Lances with dual-door Northern Counties bodies in the fleet of Metroline Travel are at present in public service. The operator is looking for a buyer for them.

The last Leyland Atlantean in the Londonlinks fleet bowed out after a farewell tour on 28 September.

An Automatic Vehicle Location system, already in use in parts of London, has been extended to cover 24 routes operated from Merton and Stockwell Garages by London General, and on six routes from London Central's Camberwell Garage.

LT does know it's Christmas . . .

I was pleased to hear that what one might now call the usual Christmas Day bus services will again be running in London. Even more pleasing is the news that you can actually ring LT travel information for a timetable leaflet. All the services are, of course, outside the Travelcard and other schemes, so only cash fares are accepted.

Three operators will be running this year's six central London services — London Central, Metroline Travel and Stagecoach East London, and one of the routes — 714 — will be worked by 'two-person Routemaster buses.' All routes are numbered in the 700s, and if you deduct the first numeral you will have the number of the basic 364-days-a-year

service on which at least part of the route is based.

The routes run every 30 minutes, and start between 09.30 and 10.30 with last journeys between about 17.40 and 19.30. Routes and operators are: 712 (London Central, Peckham-Hammersmith Broadway), 714 (Stagecoach East London, Earl's Court-Russell Square); 715 (London Central and Stagecoach East London, Shepherd's Bush-Tower Bridge); 716 (Metroline Travel, Cricklewood-Trafalgar Square); 724 (London Central, Pimlico-Hampstead Heath); and 752 (Metroline Travel, Trafalgar Square-Willesden).

MILLAR'S Tales

ALAN MILLAR'S MONTHLY COLUMN OF MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Whatever happened to...? ... the London concept 'decker'

It's a year since our 'In London' pages were graced with a London Transport artist's vision of the Routemaster for the 21st century — a curvy, highly glazed Setra lookalike double-decker with low floors and concealed windscreens wipers.

Twelve months on, and LT Buses is still awarding five-year contracts to keep RMLs in service at least until 2003. On the other hand, Plaxton's impressive Volvo-chassised President — another concept bus — is the closest anyone has yet gone to put the LT drawings into metal, even if it lacks the impractical flair of last year's original.

Plaxton's people in Scarborough and Wigan hope that the President will indeed form part of the Routemaster-replacement fleet, but the first contracts that call for low-floor double-deckers in London will simply see the demise of more Titans and Metrobuses. To get away with slaughtering RMLs, the great LT public relations machine may need to be cranked into hyping up the launch of these buses next year into something more than just another fleet of low-floor buses.

How about giving the class a name? Like Glidemaster or Sleekline. Any suggestions, dear readers?

Mainline goes cool for clubbers, but why hire Blakey?

One of the bus industry's challenges is to try overcoming its image with the nation's youth. Trains may be okay, but for many teenagers, it simply isn't cool to catch a bus.

Maybe that's why the Mainline Group has launched Bus Zero, a city centre minibus service aimed at Sheffield's young pubbers and clubbers. It operates every 10 minutes from 8pm to midnight on Wednesdays to Saturdays and uses a specially adapted ex-South London MCW Metrorider.

In this case, special adaption includes ultraviolet lighting, blacked-out windows, music and a condom machine. I trust that this last-named item never gets mixed up with Autoslot-type ticket machines or else more prim

daytime passengers could be in for a surprise when they buy their ticket to town.

With what amounts to a mobile disco going on the road, I was surprised to find Mainline launching it with our old friend Stephen Lewis, aka Inspector Blakey of 'seventies TV sitcom *On The Buses*. Blakey was popular when Bus Zero's target passengers' parents were frequenting discos and is the very personification of all that's apparently uncool about bus travel. Perhaps the fact that there isn't a sexier popular bus character left Mainline without any choice.



Crowning glories

The impractical features of LT's drawing of its future buses are nothing to what greeted readers of *The Independent* on 22 November when the newspaper reproduced five architectural practices' surreal ideas for sprucing up the Oxford Street Christmas lights. Most of these ideas relied heavily on double-deckers to achieve the desired effect.

One imagined Metrobuses in near-transparent ultraviolet reflective paint and imbued with powers to look like presents unwrapping themselves, but this was soundly eclipsed by 'Three Kings', the creation of Richard Portchmouth of Birds, Portchmouth & Russum, a scheme which he says 'uses the inherent character of the red Routemaster buses'.

'Routemasters' (well an RTW and two RTLs, but who's quibbling) as depicted in *The Independent* as part of London's Christmas lights.

Donning my anorak, I have to note that the 'Routemasters' are an RTW and two RTLs, but don't let that pedantry get in the way of a good yarn. Like the Biblical three kings, these No 25s travel east, but there the similarity starts to fade. They have roof-mounted illuminated crowns which are kept semi-inflated by the buses' exhausts while travelling in and out of central London, inflating to full capacity along Oxford Street itself.

'A myrrh-scented filter could be fitted to the inflatables to treat the exhaust fumes,' Portchmouth adds, 'so that the people of London get the present they really want: a bit of fresh air.'

What are the hidden meanings?

As you feast your eyes (whether in admiration or displeasure) upon Arriva's wheels within wheels, Stagecoach's stripes or now upon FirstGroup's dark blue and magenta, apparently you may need to think beyond the colours and styles you see to find deeper meanings identified by designers.

I say this because John Marsh has passed on a copy of *Design Week* in which there's a description of the new livery adopted by Thames Trains, part of the Go-Ahead Group's rail interests. There's nothing deeply (or necessarily even faintly) offensive about the blue, green and white colours or their jazzy application with egg shapes

around the doors, but the designer's description is worthy of *Private Eye's* Pseud's Corner. Blue denotes reliability, green friendliness, orange lettering is for brightness and modernity and the Avenir typeface is for strength and authority.

As John says, these thoughts are hardly going to cross commuters' brains as they catch the 08.15 to Paddington and they're no more likely to influence the choice of operator when these same people decide to hail a passing bus. More likely they'll tell you they don't give a flying f for such pretentious-sounding twaddle, even if they like the magenta f.



'Inspector Blakey'; just the person to attract young passengers in Sheffield?

Dutch courage in Suffolk as Hull gets its wires crossed

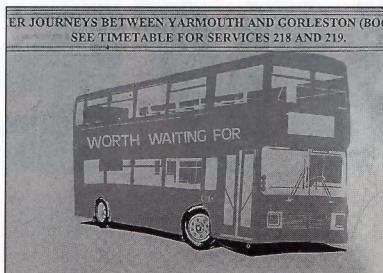
Your sightings of wrong-way-round buses in publicity material continue to amuse and amaze. Keep sending them in.

David Jukes spotted one of the more curious creations yet, a left-hand-drive apparition of a Northern Counties-bodied Olympian, on an Eastern Counties roadside timetable at Corton, north of Lowestoft. Perhaps that corner of East Anglia is so far east that operating practices are wafting across the North Sea from the Netherlands, but the picture suggests that — contrary to the writing on the side of the bus — this might not be worth the wait.

The structure looks like it's not survived the conversion without suffering terminal damage, as it's sagging badly towards the back. The wheels also look like this is a 2.5 metre body mounted on one of the latest 2.55 metre chassis.

Just as intriguing is the choice of artwork for a recent recruitment drive at Stagecoach Kingston Upon Hull. No sleek, striped ALX200s or 300s here. Not even an accidental revival of a City Transport Scania, but a wrong-way-round utility trolleybus, suitably shorn of its booms which is just as well as the advert is

aimed partly at express services drivers. And in case your magnifying glass won't blow things up that far, I'm reliably informed that this is a wrong-way-round Derby trolleybus.



Stagecoach 
KINGSTON UPON HULL

P.C.V. DRIVERS

Full Time Vacancies
for

**LOCAL SERVICE BUSES &
EXPRESS SERVICES**

Applications are invited, in writing to:
Tim Bullock, Stagecoach -
Kingston Upon Hull,
Foster Street,
Hull, HU8 8BT.

Applicants must hold a current PCV Driving Licence.

Lefthand drive double-deckers; a sagging Olympian in Suffolk and a state-of-the-art trolleybus in Hull.

Great value, so why worry about speed?

When you've travelled from London to Glasgow on a £58 Apex return rail ticket, you don't want to spend more than that on a single ticket back again if you break the rules and decide to go back south a couple of days early. That's why Mrs M and I opted for a National Express coach when a house-selling mini-crisis foreshortened a house-hunting foray in October.

One of the long haul bits of what used to be British Rail offered us a walk-on single fare of £69 to London if we could wait until its computers could be kicked back into action, while British Airways offered a £72 return deal to Heathrow which, in this Byzantine world of ticket sales, is apparently cheaper than a single.

I wasn't going to be the one to suggest it, but Mrs M had seen an advertisement for a coach service, remembered with touching fondness how they got her from Victoria to Digbeth in her student days in the 'seventies and the upshot was that we finished up paying £26 for two singles with NatEx. And I've got to say it was exceptional value for money, even if eight-and-a-half hours is longer than I'd volunteer to spend sitting in a Boeing 747, never mind a coach.

Truth be told, our Volvo/Plaxton Expressliner 2 was no less comfortable than a tourist class jumbo, and it was a sight cleaner and the aisle less obstructed with luggage than the scruffy Virgin Rail train from Euston.

With price and relative comfort on its side, I'm surprised, then, that National Express bothers about speed, but it was clear before Carlisle that our advertised arrival time in Victoria was ambitious. Once we were caught in the daily gridlock on the M6 north of Wolverhampton, it was unachievable and we arrived 40 minutes late. We would have been even later had not one of our drivers — and I'll name no NatEx contractors' names to protect the guilty — made increasing, but illegal use of the third lane of the M1 as he made up lost time.

I just feel that the process could be a little less panic-laden had the journey been timetabled to take another hour. At £13 single, surely no one is going to be deterred by a slower advertised journey that saves anyone meeting a coach from standing unnecessarily in the wind and rain and which doesn't encourage otherwise highly professional, customer-friendly drivers to break the law.



Memories live on in Walsall

It's nice to see that 30 years of corporate image changes haven't quite reached every corner of Travel West Midlands. The buses may all carry the new name and, where appropriate, the new livery, but a corner of the company's Walsall garage is becoming a museum of its typographical past. The stores sign (*pictured above*) proclaims West Midlands Travel

more than a year after the names were rearranged and, 28 years after it was subsumed into the original West Midlands PTE, it proudly proclaims that it's still Walsall Corporation Motors — a name that presumably encompassed electric as well as internal combustion motors given the erstwhile municipality's proud trolleybus tradition.

ENQUIRE

WITHIN

What is DiPTAC and what does it recommend?

As well as ushering in deregulation and privatisation of the bus industry, the 1985 Transport Act created the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DiPTAC) to advise Secretaries of State for Transport on transport matters affecting disabled people. It includes a bus and coach working group, with representatives of the main committee as well as operators and manufacturers.

It advises the industry and legislators on ways of making their vehicles more accessible by people with disabilities — people who can walk as well as those confined to wheelchairs, the partially sighted and deaf, too — and is responsible for the widespread adoption of brightly-coloured handpoles, palm-operated bell pushes and zig-zag markings on step edges. And, of course, it has been influential in making step heights shallower as well as encouraging operators to introduce low-floor buses with features to make life easier for those with mobility problems.

Earlier this year, it published its first recommended specification for low-floor buses, saying at least 50% of the available floor space for passengers on single-deckers should be step-free. The double-deck equivalent is 35%. The recommendations also specify things like the positioning of handrails, the need for white-on-blue wheelchair symbols to be placed outside buses that accommodate them and the provision of at least three fixed forward or rearward-facing priority seats for elderly and ambulant disabled people. They also say that the throat width — the floor area between the front wheelarches — should be at least 800mm, although it will accept 750mm on vehicles registered before 30 September this year.

The recommendations took account of the latest generation of single-door buses with gently ramped floors, permitting a maximum gradient of 3°. However, a revised version issued in October has reduced this to 2°. These latest recommendations also suggest fitting wheelchair lifts instead of ramps on low-floor buses run on rural routes where there aren't many pavements with kerbs.

FLEETLINE FAREWELL

IN THE WEST MIDLANDS



Fleetline Finale —
the last day in service —
PHILIP LAMB reports.

Above:
7000 waits at the Bromford Bridge terminus in
Hyperion Road, before working the 14.00
service to the City Centre. Note the remains of
the Bundy clock.
PHILIP LAMB

Opposite:
6967 on the turning circle at Hyperion Road. It
looks like just an ordinary day in service . . .
PHILIP LAMB

7000 became a significant number in the history of the Daimler/Leyland Fleetline on 1 November 1997. Demonstrator 7000 HP was the first Fleetline to operate in Birmingham, entering service at Lea Hall Garage on route 14. Thirty-seven years later, fleet number 7000 (WDA 700T) was the last Fleetline to come off service at Washwood Heath Garage, and being the last of a major type in service, was, in time-honoured tradition, towed by Travel West Midlands staff into the garage.

This brought to an end not only the last day of operation, but also an era. Birmingham City Transport operated its first Daimler in 1904, and although 7000 is technically a Leyland product, its design is of Daimler origin.

During the day five Fleetlines, 6477, 6898,

6952, 6967 and 7000 were scheduled to maintain service 27, with a few runs made by 6932. They were aided by examples from TWM's fleet of 'heritage'-liveried MCW Metrobuses, and abetted by bizarre single-deck conversion Fleetline 1956 (ex-6956). The oldest bus currently active in the fleet, Leyland National 1745 (PTF 745L), which started life with Ribble, also ran on the service. The 27, operated by Washwood Heath Garage, serves Birmingham Markets from Bromford Bridge. Local residents and regular travellers were at a loss to discover why their local bus service was attracting so much attention on this particular day, with armies of photographers eager to record the occasion.

As for the buses themselves, 7000 had been spruced up for the occasion, and bore the inscription '93 years of Daimler Motorbus

Standard West Midlands PTE Daimler/Leyland Fleetlines

4036-4060*	XON 36-60J	CRG6	1971
4061-4135*	YOX 61-135K	CRG6	1971
4136-4235	YOX 136-235K	CRG6	1971/72
4243-4342*	EOF 243-303L, NOB 304-42M	CRG6	1973
4530-4579*	GOG 530-79N	CRL6	1975
4580-4605*	GOG 580-605N	CRG6	1975
4606-4629*	JOV 606-29P	CRG6	1975
6301-6420	KON 301-75P, NOC 376-420R	FE30ALR	1976
6421-6500	NOC 421-500R	FE30AGR	1976/77
6571-6610*	MOM 571-80P, NOC 581-610R	FE30AGR	1976
6611-6660*	SDA 611-60S	FE30AGR	1977/78
6661-6690*	WDA 661-90T	FE30AGR	1978/79
6691-6720	SDA 691-720S	FE30AGR	1978
6721-6760**	NOC 721-45R, SDA 746-60S	FE30AGR	1977/78
6761-6800	SDA 761-800S	FE30AGR	1978
6866-7000	TVP 866-905S, WDA 906-99T, WDA 700T	FE30AGR	1978/79

The following were refurbished 1992/93:

6443/71/4/7/88, 6615/19/21/4/30/4/42/50/60/1/7/77/81/99, 6714/8/23/8/35/41/52/7/64, 6866/9/74/6/80/8/90, 6902/5/11/12/15/25/9/32/3/41/60/72/91/9, 7000. Total:50

Notes

- * Park Royal-bodied
- ** East Lancs-bodied, originally ordered by Coventry City Transport
- 1 4069 converted to open top
- 2 Converted to 6LX 1979-86
- 3 6571-6600 were 6LX-powered (all other FE30AGR were delivered with 6LXBs)
- 4 Were to be East Lancs-bodied, originally ordered by Coventry City Transport — order transferred to MCW

operation in Birmingham 1904 to 1997 proudly on each side between the decks, and on its upper rear panel. 6898 had curiously survived in the pale grey and blue livery tried briefly in 1989/90, whilst the remainder were decked out in standard fleet livery. Each bus made an average of seven return journeys, until, in the gathering darkness, No 7000, pulled into the garage yard at Washwood Heath at 16.12 for the last time.

In a brief ceremony the vehicle was handed over to Mac Cooper of Aston Manor Museum of Transport by David Leeder, Chief Executive of Travel West Midlands.

The scene of the day's events, Washwood Heath Garage, is one of the oldest currently in use by TWM. Trams (and later trolleybuses, which were replaced there in 1940 by Daimler COG5s and assorted utilities), operated from there until 1950, when more Daimler COG5s and more significantly CVD6s took over. Guy Arab IVs followed in 1953, and then, in 1963, the first Fleetlines arrived to operate route 55. Since 1979, MCW Metrobuses and, later,

Leyland Lynxes, have slowly ousted the Fleetlines, and now the final examples have gone.

Left:
Within an hour of coming off service, 6898 and 6967 stand shrouded in exhaust in Washwood Heath Garage — the blinds have already been removed.
PHILIP LAMB



FLEETLINE FAREWELL IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

35 years' continuous service to a city

Now that the last Leyland Fleetlines have disappeared from Birmingham's streets, LAURENCE KNIGHT looks back over the type's career in the city.

With many new buses coming into service around the country, older types are rapidly being phased out. One victim of this trend is the Daimler/Leyland Fleetline — once a common sight, but now almost extinct.

An indigenous species

The Fleetline has been synonymous with the West Midlands — Daimlers were built in Coventry, with all the local municipalities operating them. This tradition was maintained when the PTE was formed in 1969. Its double-deck fleet never actually became 100% Fleetline — Bristol VRTs and Ailsas were purchased to make up for shortfalls — but for some years a visitor to the conurbation could be forgiven for thinking that it was!

The prototype Daimler Fleetline, 7000 HP, carried Birmingham's livery — but was never owned by the undertaking. Daimler's confidence in the operator was however richly rewarded for, following a trial batch of ten in 1962 — 3241-50 (241-50 DOC) — annual batches of 100 became the norm. These were either bodied by Metro Cammell-Weymann (Birmingham Corporation Transport's traditional bodybuilder, located in Washwood Heath) or by Park Royal, whose constituent company Crossley had provided much additional support to BCT during the difficult postwar years.

Natural choice for the PTE

This standard Fleetline body was subsequently adopted by West Midlands PTE, when it was formed in 1969. It was to a single door layout and 30ft length (BCT's last Fleetlines were 33ft long), the Park Royal body being adapted to sit lower on the chassis, producing a hybrid of 14ft 2in height. A large (almost unwieldy) front destination display was moulded to stand slightly proud of the front profile, to complete



the shape of the bus to become the standard not only for around 1,000 Fleetlines, but also for the large batches of Bristol VRTs. The family resemblance is even evident in the rather fussier-looking Metrobus that took over in 1979. Bodywork orders were again split between MCW and PRV, and eagle eyes were needed to tell these apart.

Very few changes were made to this business-like yet handsome design during the virtually continuous production run. However, a Gardner engine shortage in the mid-1970s led to some batches of Fleetlines being delivered with Leyland 680 engines. These lively buses sent classic Leyland noises echoing through the streets, but 6LXs were progressively fitted in their place as they became available from earlier Fleetlines, withdrawn in the early 1980s. The only other



Top:
February 1977, and ex-Birmingham City Transport Daimler Fleetline 3360 is seen in Priory Kingsway, Birmingham. This Metro-cammell-bodied CRG6LX, to the earlier BCT standard was new in 1964.
JOHN ROBINSON

Above right:
An early PTE Fleetline, based on the later BCT style, 4043 is seen here passing Birmingham Council House in October 1976.
JOHN ROBINSON

Right:
Originally 3531, Fleetline 5531 was rebodied with later-style body in 1978 following extensive fire damage, despite being 13 years old.
JOHN ROBINSON

engine change was the adoption of the 6LXB for later models, 6421-6570 and the range 6601-7000.

The first of the PTE standard buses was Park Royal-bodied 4036 (VON 36J), entering service in July 1971, and with gaps, fleetnumbers eventually reached 7000 early in 1979. This MCW-bodied example would, in theory, have been the PTE's last Fleetline, but it was upstaged by late deliveries from Park Royal so this accolade eventually fell to 6690 in May that year. This bus was sold for scrap last October.

From the drivers' point of view

The Fleetline, with its epicyclic four-speed gearbox and fluid flywheel made it a very easy bus to drive in busy city streets. The ratios were, as with previous Daimlers, nicely-chosen, and allowed the driver the choice of a stately departure in second gear, or more spirited, (by 1960s standards at least!), acceleration in first. However in the harsh operating environment of the West Midlands, where drivers' feet were invariably pressed steadfastly to the floor between all gearchanges, the survival of some Fleetlines for up to 20 years is a tribute to the quality of their construction.

Drivers were not however initially so impressed by the type's notoriously heavy steering. An empty Fleetline roaring over an uneven inner-city road surface could also be a rough rider. The later fitting of 'Autosteer' power assistance to the steering, and cab heaters went some way to making drivers' lives easier. Inevitably, comparisons with the air-sprung fully-automatic MCW Metrobus did the Fleetline no favours, and enthusiasts were perhaps slow to appreciate a type that had swept away the interesting variety of PTE stock of 1969!

The beginning of the end became apparent when the PTE began pursuing a policy of a 12-year vehicle life. The Metrobus, a natural successor to the dependable but outdated Fleetline, scored in three areas. Firstly, it retained the popular Gardner 6LXB engine. Secondly, it featured the near-indestructible Voith D851 fully automatic gearbox, and thirdly, it glided along on its air suspension. Hundreds entered service during the 1980s and the Fleetline's future was further dented by the fleet contraction that presaged privatisation. Under the new order that was West Midlands Travel, the purchase of Metrobuses continued, whilst the operator began to run out of closed-down garages in which to store surplus Fleetlines. The writing, it seemed, was on the wall with all remaining examples due at that stage for withdrawal by 1991.

Fleetline's second heyday

It was at around this time that two unconnected events occurred to precipitate the Fleetline's lengthy stay of execution. The writer recalls visiting a garage dominated by the type, and being told that because Metrobuses were 'falling apart at the seams', (a combination of corrosion problems and an inherently weak rear end), rows of withdrawn Fleetlines were to be reinstated, refurbished and repainted into the then new WMT livery of blue/red/silver. Thus around 50 examples,

both from service and long-term storage, were given a sparkling new life.

Then, as privatisation spawned a seemingly endless stream of new bus operators, the vogue for long term vehicle hire was exploited assiduously by WMT. Evidently most operators preferred to hire the more modern Metrobus, so many more Fleetlines were dusted down and repainted to take their place, and, in the case of some, sent out on hire too. Despite the withdrawal and scrapping of worn-out examples, the number available for service, according to my records, actually increased from 128 in October 1993 to 147 in December 1994, and 153 in April 1995.

New haunts for elderly survivors

The hiring out of buses gained added impetus with the despatch of 40 Metrobuses to North Western/Bee Line, and the Fleetline revival started to bring pleasant surprises to enthusiasts (and, I dare say, a few groans amongst platform staff!). The biggest of all was caused when the 11 remaining East Lancs-bodied buses from a batch ordered by Coventry City Transport prior to its absorption in 1974, which had been in exile in their home city for

most of their lives, resurfaced at Walsall in 1993. This had been a Fleetline-free establishment for 10 years, yet these new arrivals, obviously still sound after 15 years' more gentle service in Coventry, coped easily with up to four years' further service on arduous Black Country services.

Broadgate, Coventry is the setting for this superb study of late-model Leyland Fleetline 6998, recorded in December 1995.
JOHN ROBINSON



THE END IN COVENTRY

Thirty-two years of service drew to a close earlier this year, when the Fleetline retired from the streets of its birthplace, Coventry, since 1976 part of the West Midlands PTE area, and now Travel West Midlands territory.

Also at an end was Coventry's association with Daimler buses, which began 68 years previously in 1929. Pictured at the gates of the former Daimler works in Sandy Lane, the first port of call on a farewell tour, are 6756 and 6986. 6986 had been a Coventry bus throughout its existence, whilst 6757, now in preservation, and having been withdrawn from Walsall after two years there, was part of an order for 40 East Lancs-bodied examples placed by Coventry Corporation Transport, but delivered to West Midlands PTE, following the former's absorption by the latter. Like its brethren, 6757 spent the best years of its life in its intended home city.

PICTURE AND INFORMATION: T. W. MOORE



FLEETLINE FAREWELL IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Meanwhile Yardley Wood garage in South Birmingham, also devoid of the type for some time, gradually assembled a fleet of 12, nominally for schools and contract work; but it was not long before Fleetlines were once again holding their own on the Stratford Road, particularly on route 6 to Solihull. In early 1996, one could still travel far and wide on Fleetlines — as far east as Coventry, west to Wolverhampton on the lengthy 79 (one of the first routes to be operated by 'standard' Fleetlines in 1971), north to Walsall courtesy of Perry Barr garage (route 51), around the Black Country from West Bromwich and even on clockwise circuits of the Outer Circle (11C). Stourbridge and Gornal Wood were two other far outposts still visited by the type.

The end finally comes

Although by 1996 Metrobuses were returning off-hire and large numbers of the type were being rebuilt to overcome the corrosion problems mentioned earlier, it was the large-scale orders for Volvo single-deckers, mostly low-floor, that really sealed the fate of the Fleetline in the West Midlands. Most of Quinton garage's allocation were soon casualties, leaving four examples (6901/23/34/41) to soldier on amongst the multitudes of Metrobuses. Walsall's gradually faded away without ceremony and Perry Barr's last six were summarily despatched to Selly Oak (last staging point before Barnsley) when route 33 was converted to low-floor buses in February 1997. The momentum increased when Coventry's allocation of 23 (all but one of which had spent their entire 18-year lives there) were withdrawn by mid-June this year.

This left only Washwood Heath with Fleetlines — five in all, none of them looking pristine, as repainting of the type ceased around November 1994, with some late repaints in any case not lasting very long in service. Inexplicably, 6898 (TVP 898S) survived (outlasting its former sisters at Perry Barr from where it had escaped some years earlier), operating from Washwood Heath as sole survivor in the grey/blue livery briefly favoured around 1990. Perhaps it has taken this long for WMT/TWM to realise that pale grey gloss actually lasts better than metallic silver (some Metrobus repaints during the spring reverted to grey for the 'silver' part of their livery).

So finally the curtain has fallen after 93 years' association between the West Midlands and MCW-bodied Daimlers — not to mention 35 years' operation of the Fleetline. The writer has shared a long affection with the type — finding the Fleetline as typical of Birmingham as Routemasters are of London. They will be sadly missed now, seven years after that symbolic statement by a depot engineer, Metrobuses once again rule the roost. With so many more new Volvo, Mercedes and Optare low-floor buses on the way, even the current Metrobus fleet cannot all be safe for much longer — but that's another story.

THEY WEREN'T ALL STANDARD, YOU KNOW!

LAURENCE KNIGHT examines the non-standard variations

Amongst the many hundreds of standard Fleetlines bought by the WMPTE, very few have stood out from the crowd. The most obvious and bizarre experiment involves 6956 (WDA 956T) — a single deck conversion that resembles BCT's strange Marshall-bodied single-deck

Fleetlines of 1965. Perhaps someone, somewhere knows the reason for this experiment. Was a whole fleet of 'baseball bats', (as 1956 became known due to its enlarged front end), planned? The existence of this heavyweight, ponderous 37-seater became more irrelevant with the arrival of scores of new Volvo saloons and TWM, in its embarrassment, hid the machine away on discreet local suburban routes.

The only other major experiment that comes to mind was with 6787 (SDA 787S). It was fitted with a Maxwell automatic gearbox, and enjoyed a modest career at Dudley before being amongst the first of its batch to be withdrawn (by 1988).

On the subject of automatic Fleetlines, some 80 DMSs were purchased from London Transport (via Ensign) in 1979/80 — all Gardner-engined and with MCW bodies. The automatic gear control did not suit the sense of urgency that characterises Birmingham operations so this facility was removed, along with the centre exit, before entry into service. They were still distinctly DMS in appearance, although a couple tried to masquerade as PTE Fleetlines with standard destination equipment. About four more years of useful service was obtained from these buses which were persona non grata in the Capital.

More numerous were the Leyland 680-engined Fleetlines (CRL6 4530-79 and FE30ALR 6301-6420) bought during a mid-seventies Gardner famine. They were all subsequently converted to Gardner power.

In 1978 MCW managed to shoe-horn its standard body on to the slightly smaller dimensions of a 1965 Fleetline whose original body was burnt out; but generally the only other odd men out were 6721-60 which had been ordered by the erstwhile Coventry municipality, and delivered with distinctive East Lancs bodies. Only recently did the last of these bow out of service.

There have been few livery variations since 1971 — grey with red lining was substituted for cream for a while around 1989/90, then the current 'red stripe' livery took over. Non-standard variations were restricted to certain examples at Perry Barr (blue window surrounds in Metrobus style, on their blue/cream livery) and a few one-offs such as 6881 (grey livery with blue roof and upper deck windows subsequently added) and 6710 (red stripe livery but with black window surrounds).



Above:
Seen outside Washwood Heath Garage on
1 November is curious single-deck conversion 6956.
PHILIP LAMB



Top and above:
The end is near for 6688, lying stripped of useful parts
at Ensign Bus' yard in Rainham, Essex, November
1997. The June 1990 view depicts 6688, freshly
painted in the short-lived grey/blue scheme.
PHILIP LAMB/DANIEL HILL

CITYBUS

LOW-FLOOR TRIAL

DAVID BARROW reports on the entry into service of further low-floor double-deckers in Hong Kong



While Kowloon Motor Bus now has the first Dennis Trident low-floor double-deckers, Citybus in Hong Kong is taking delivery of a trial batch of five low-floor, three-axle double-deckers. They consist of four of the first Dennis Tridents to be built, two, like the KMB ones with Alexander's new ALX500 body, the others with a new body from Duple-Metsec, assembled by Caetano in Portugal, while the fifth is a new departure; it is an MAN CR221LD ultra-low chassis with Australian-built Volgren 96-seat two-door bodywork, both new names for Hong Kong. Volgren already builds on MAN low-floor single-deck chassis for the Australian market, though this is its first double-decker.

Unlike the other four the Volgren body has a top-deck windscreen which is interchangeable with the other double-deckers in the fleet, and is therefore to the same style as the Alexander R-type. In common with the others the MAN is wheelchair accessible through either door and a spiral staircase is fitted in the centre of the lower deck, adjacent to the exit. The 12m-long vehicle is powered by a 350bhp MAN Euro 2 engine driving through a ZF 5HP600 transmission.

One of the Metsec Tridents is dual-purpose and will be used on some of the 13 services to the new Che Lap Kok airport awarded to Citybus when it opens in 1998. The six-year franchise will need over 100 air-conditioned buses which will be met by 12m Volvo Olympians with Alexander and Plaxton bodywork until they can be replaced by low-floor buses. The other four low-floor double-deckers will be used on local routes on Hong Kong Island, which have heavy loadings and difficult terrain.

Although trials are only just beginning, Citybus already has 64 Tridents in build and has ordered 11 Berkhof-bodied MAN double-deckers together with 60 MAN NL262 single-deckers.

Above:
The first Met-Sec-bodied Dennis Trident rolls off the ship in Kwai Chung container terminal in Hong Kong after assembly by Caetano in Portugal.
DANNY CHAN

Left:
The prototype Volgren-bodied MAN double-decker on trial in Hong Kong during October. DANNY CHAN

COWB

For as long as one can remember the most abusive term that could be applied to a bus or coach operator has been that of a 'Cowboy'. The relevant definition in my dictionary is 'someone in a business or trade who provides shoddy goods or services, a reckless, irresponsible person.' In the BR years (Before Ridley) the term was often glibly bandied about by public sector or BET operators in reference to those in the independent sector. The truth was rarely what these people would have you believe; more often than not they were simply voicing their frustration at having competitors with lower overheads who managed to be more cost-effective.

Who is the real cowboy?

The term 'cowboy' simply reveals the prejudices of the user. The all-time classic cowboy is, of course, Stagecoach — at any rate according to those who do not bother with the trivia of checking their facts before pontificating. There may well be legitimate criticisms that can be made about aspects of the organisation, but providing shoddy bus services is not one of them. Cowboy operators are also rarely known for large scale investment in new vehicles. No, much as I personally dislike the livery and mourn the loss of identity of some (but not all) of the constituent fleets, I have to tell you that in almost all cases Stagecoach customers have a better standard of service with newer, cleaner vehicles and, with a few notable exceptions, politer drivers than they did previously. Obviously I do not expect the tabloid press or the MP for Pendle to agree with me.

Let me tell you about a real cowboy. For obvious reasons I can not identify him, but I can assure you that what follows is fact. Having had a fleet of seven coaches repossessed by a hire purchase company some years ago he decided to operate one coach. During the summer it was engaged on weekly tours to a country in Europe which had also better remain nameless. This coach was a 41-seat Leopard. However, when the local vehicle examiner eventually caught up with it he

discovered a heater box between two seats instead of under one of them. He measured the clearance between front of seat cushion and backrest of next seat. Then he counted seats. There were 45 . . . Then there was the Bedford SB which operated with no inner rear wheels, just the outers. Part time drivers were, naturally, paid cash-in-hand. When driver's hours regulations came in they were, of course, ignored and no records were kept. This man is still in business and is, in fact, a very likeable rogue whose customers think he is wonderful. So many concepts exist solely in the eye of the beholder — even, I fear, safety.

The quality approach

I was taught my trade by people who took what they saw as their responsibilities seriously. Vehicles should be turned out to the highest standard possible and cleaned before and after every job. They should be

maintained and driven in accordance with the regulations. The customers were always right, even when they were wrong.

In time I learned that the Great British Public does not always want what it claims to want, certainly if it can save money! This is no excuse, however, for cynicism and disillusionment and most operators try to uphold the best traditions of the industry. Sometimes they fail, occasionally spectacularly, but as readers of *Buses* all know, standards of professionalism in this industry are generally very high. Unfortunately public perception is all too often based on an extremely biased and distorted media view of the world in which good news is bad and bad news is good (for their business).

Of course there are operators who let us down, particularly in terms of the image of the bus (and coach) that they present, and in doing so they negate the efforts of those who are



It is perhaps unfortunate that the word 'stagecoach' is so readily associated with cowboy stories; modern buses, a smart, clean image and generally a good level of service may typify Stagecoach, but are not associated with cowboys! An East Kent Volvo Olympian/Alexander arrives in Canterbury.
STEPHEN MORRIS

OYS

Surely now that services are settling down after deregulation, the term 'Cowboy' has been dropped from our vocabulary?

JOHN CASH isn't so sure . . .

Inset:
Trent may have become boring when it changed alliance from AECs, but it still invests in a long-term future.
STEPHEN MORRIS

Main picture:
PHILIP LAMB

trying to raise standards ever higher. It may well be that the elderly, unwashed, anonymous National that looks as if it was painted with the yard brush is mechanically perfect and only had its brakes relined yesterday but will it attract the patronage of the occupants of a BMW? Or a Proton? Perhaps a Lada? Of course not. Public transport will continue to be a non-starter option in the minds of car owners as long as that sort of image continues.

The Trent approach (*Buses* June 1997) is working because it is comprehensive. It is also costly in terms of investment in the fleet and in the training of staff; neither should it be forgotten that the investment is on-going and was not a one-off. Trent obviously believes that the prospective accumulation is worth the speculation.

In fact, Trent has a long tradition of concern with image. As a young bus enthusiast living on the eastern outskirts of Derby I used to consider Trent a very boring operator simply because of the uniformity of its image. I also never forgave the change from AEC to Leyland! Barton buses were much more interesting . . . the industry does not, however, function solely for the benefit of young bus enthusiasts and 40 years ago Trent had a far more up-market image than Derby Corporation. On the down side, the staff were not as friendly as those of Felix or Tailby & George. Later, in NBC days, Trent continued to keep vehicle appearance up to scratch, always ensuring that even the most minor body damage was repaired and painted immediately.

Trent Buses' efforts to promote public transport in a positive way deserve recognition, as do a significant number of operators working in the same way. Unfortunately they have an uphill struggle against those who still believe that is is sufficient simply to ensure that the bus turns up on time.

Your editor is quite right to highlight the positive results of the last Transport Act (and to be concerned about the possible effects of the next). The fact that travel by bus or coach is being considered as an alternative to the car on certain occasions by some is an encouraging but fragile development. As an unrepentant pessimist (it's so nice to be proved wrong) I fear that as yet not all operators are singing from the same hymn sheet and that even when they are it's to different tunes. The media-promoted image problem of this industry is not going to go away.



PHILIP LAMB

examines how a new life is created for tired motorway coaches.

Author's pictures.

OPEN TOP SURGERY

One hundred and twenty-seven were built. There were two basic variants — one was a single-door, front-entrance 84-seater with conventional front staircase, the other a slightly more up-market dual-door version seating 73 with a nearside staircase behind the centre exit. Undoubtedly these vehicles were successful, but an inherent condition of their primary function would lead to their redundancy after only seven years. At first, no clear rôle for them in their second life emerged. Some became flagships for small coach operators, some football teams' executive transport, whilst others, operating on the periphery of the market for which they were designed — where the seven-year rule did not apply, continued to perform their intended duties a little longer. Then, in 1990, someone decided to cut the top off one of the 59 single-door examples, cram 63 seats on to the top deck and put these creatures of the motorway to work on busy city streets, hardly ever achieving 30 mph in the course of a normal day's work. It was an unqualified success, leading to one of the most comprehensive bus-rejuvenation programmes ever. We are of course talking about the double-deck MCW Metroliner and London sightseeing tour operator, London Pride.

MCW launched its double-deck Metroliner (there was a less successful single-deck version too) in 1982. It was intended from the outset as a high-quality long distance express coach — such vehicles (mainly of continental origin), being in vogue at the time. The obvious

customers were NBC subsidiaries with National Express contracts, who between them took a total of 94, with the remaining 33 (mainly two-door versions) going to other express operators. London Pride's current fleet of 23 (including one closed-top), originated in the main with NBC subsidiaries — experience has shown the more conventional single-door variant to be more suitable. (The main problem with the dual-door examples being the staircase — its unconventional position is not suitable for a frequent loading/unloading type of operation.) Dual-door examples were acquired and ran initially in closed-top form, (as did some single-door variants), but these have now been phased out. One dual-door example was converted to single door/front staircase layout, but this was deemed an uneconomic exercise, rendering the vehicle unique.

Early conversions

What began as a simple conversion has evolved into a major rebuilding programme, resulting in something approaching a new bus — as far as the body is concerned at least. London Pride is the trading name of Ensign Bus & Coach, a company which is no stranger to major conversion and rebuilding work — remember Ensign and the DMS?

Early conversions simply involved decapitation. A V-shaped front screen at 'window-level' was substituted for the Metroliner's original deep wrap-round version, thus allowing a conventional destination box (inevitably of DMS-origin) to be fitted. This screen is common in design, but not in execution, to all Ensign's current open-top conversions, and incorporates a fibreglass moulding to the outside. 12 inches of window pillar (higher across the rear) remained after surgery. Between these, tubular steel safety rails rising at the rear, were welded. Drain holes to the upper deck floor were provided, and finally 63 vinyl-covered ex-Leyland National seats were fitted to the top deck and the vehicles, following overhaul went out on service.

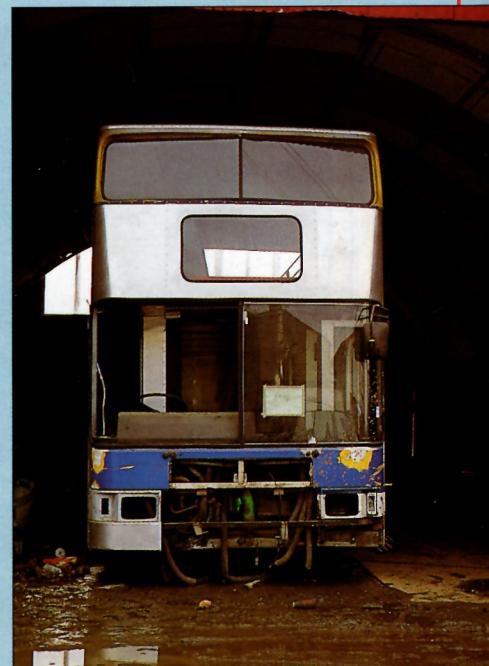
The success in service of the early vehicles has led to more and more of the single-door examples being sought. These have, naturally, become increasingly difficult to locate, especially in good order. Consequently, the

Main picture:
MCW Metroliners 409 and 412 at Ensign's Rainham base in November.

Top:
Comparison with the MCW Metrobus behind, confirms the length and style of 421, resting in Regent Street between turns on the Grand Tour.

Above right:
Partly converted 417 (C907 GUD) demonstrates the new raised front upper-deck screen with repainting below, allowing the fitting of a conventional-style destination box.

Right:
As acquired, B223 VHW awaits conversion.



amount of remedial work necessary has grown to such an extent that now, when vehicles are acquired, they are subject to a rigorous rebuilding programme. Existing fleet members are also being rebuilt when appropriate — the slack winter period meant that several early acquisitions were present at the time of our visit, undergoing restoration.

The programme develops

Apart from attacking the Metroliners with a hacksaw as described above, the upper deck floor is now fitted with curved cove panels and extra drain holes — the whole being covered with Terraflex flooring, before the seats are fitted. This process helps to prevent rainwater from finding its way behind the panelling and causing "open-top rot". The vinyl seats are recovered on site. All body panels are removed, allowing any corroded body members to be replaced, before the bus is reclad in aluminium. (The original panelling was steel.) Where toilets were fitted, these are removed, allowing an extra row of seats and an extra window to be cut in the side. The lower deck floor is also covered with Terraflex, in preparation for the refitting of coach seats — no shortage of these! The coach seats are currently being re-upholstered in blue moquette by an outside contractor. All the downstairs seats are now forward facing — the built in table to the front offside is retained, but the nearside table is omitted. Gone too is the soft trim — interior panels are simply painted white. New lights and speakers are fitted to lower deck cove panels. The large luggage compartment remains unused. A new one-piece aluminium engine compartment cover is fabricated, replacing the existing (and fussy) steel/fibreglass structure, and finally the plug door is replaced by a two-leaf express type.

As far as the mechanical condition of the vehicles is concerned, this can vary tremendously upon acquisition — most being quite poor. Work required varies from a light overhaul to a complete engine change. Such work is normally carried out by Cummins. (The Metroliner

is fitted with an L10, driving through a Voith D854G 4-speed automatic gearbox, mounted transversely at the rear.) Cummins carries out the work on site, with a complete engine change taking up to 36 hours, using a factory reconditioned unit. One Metroliner 377 (B117 ORU) was converted to run on LP gas, but this was not a success. Instead, vehicles are being fitted with catalytic converters, and run on low-sulphur fuel.

Various stages

We were fortunate, at the time of our visit, in being able to inspect recently acquired vehicles in different states of undress, as well as existing fleet members in for rebuilding, and a freshly arrived, and as yet untouched, specimen. This latter had been acquired from Essbee Coaches in the Western Isles, and was in a lamentable state. Moquette was ripped and missing, as was the soft trim to the roof panels revealing glue-smeared plywood. The interior's unkempt and uncared for appearance was complemented by an overpowering smell of damp, suggesting that the roof leaked badly. No matter though — it was coming off! With flat batteries, and the engine oil emulsified, the road ahead for B223 VHW looked like being long and uphill. However, work was due to commence shortly, it being expected that the rebuild would be finished in time for next spring's schedules.

Work had already begun on C907 GUD, one of a pair of ex-Oxford Citylink machines, bought from Taylors of Ditton, and carrying quasi-Oxford Citylink livery. This Metroliner had been stripped and repainted internally, fitted with a new engine compartment lid and had undergone full top deck treatment, save the fitting of the seats.

At a more advanced stage was C133 CFB, which had come from William Whitehead of Carterton, near Oxford, and was in the process of being fitted with a reconditioned engine. All bodywork reconstruction was complete — all that was needed was some paint and some seats.

In service

All that remained was to sample the service, so we travelled to Central London, Tower Hill in fact, where Ensign had arranged for us to join Metroliner 421 (C593 JAT), a completely refurbished example. We soon discovered that the top deck was maybe not the best place to spend a chilly, overcast November afternoon, and made ourselves comfortable in the relatively inviting surroundings of the lower saloon. The ride was smooth, with the bus being expertly handled by our driver, Dave, who informed us that driving a 12-metre vehicle in London traffic, negotiating tight corners etc., was not nearly as daunting as it looked!

Well, what is this all about, we hear you ask, why are Ensign going to all this trouble? Clearly its upper deck capacity is the Metroliner's main asset. In more inviting weather, everyone wants to enjoy the sights of London in the open — what other vehicle seats 63 on its open-top deck? Moreover, even though it was designed at least 15 years ago, the Metroliner still looks impressive — more so in fact without the top, its low height adding to the impression of length, the extra axle setting it aside as different from other double-deckers on the streets of the Capital. All this adds up to passenger appeal — the Metroliner has plenty, and so is an invaluable asset to Ensign in the highly competitive London tour market.

What next?

And the future, surely they're not going to last for ever? Probably not, but Ensign is doing all it can to make them last as long as possible, and is already talking to manufacturers worldwide. Watch this space.

We would like to thank Peter Newman, Chairman and Managing Director of Ensignbus, and Roger Jackson, the company's Engineering Manager and Bill Morrison of the company, for the help, patience and hospitality shown in the preparation of this article.



London Pride MCW Metroliners

CURRENT OPERATIONAL FLEET

FLEET NO	REGISTRATION	TYPE	CAPACITY	KNOWN PREVIOUS OWNERS
401 (181/371/81)	B121 ORU	DR130/3	O63/C20F	Shamrock & Rambler, Midland Red (North)
402 (372)	A112 KFX	DR130/3	O63/C20F	Shamrock & Rambler, North Western
403 (373)	A113 KFX	DR130/3	O67/C20F	Shamrock & Rambler, North Western
404 (374)	A114 KFX	DR130/3	O63/C20F	Shamrock & Rambler, North Western
405 (375)	B115 ORU	DR130/3	O63/C20F	Shamrock & Rambler, North Western
406 (376)	B222 VHW	DR130/3	O63/C16F	Wessex
407 (177/377)	IIL 7269 (B117 ORU)	DR130/3	O63/C20F	Shamrock & Rambler
408 (378)	B824 AAT (A3 GNT, 9218 RU, B116 ORU)	DR130/3	O63/C16F	Shamrock & Rambler, Good News Travels, Hull
409 (382)	B224 VHW	DR130/3	O61/C18F	Wessex Scottish Citylink
411 (381)	A667 XDA	DR130/3	O63/C23F	Midland Red (Express), Ambassador Travel, Channel Travel, Worthing
412	SNU 122 (B258 AGL)	DR130/3	O63/C20F	Western National Leon's, Stafford
413	B825 AAT (510 BVP, A5 GNT, B120 ORU)	DR130/3	O63/C23F	Shamrock & Rambler, Good News Travels, Hull Prestatyn Coachways
414	C51 VJU	DR130/22	O63/C22F	Midland Fox, John Boyce, Glasgow
415	C52 VJU	DR130/22	O63/C22F	Midland Fox, William McColl, Gartocharn
416 (379)	C906 GUD	DR130/21	O63/C23F	Oxford Citylink, Taylor, Ditton
418	D436 OWO (D192 ESC)	DR130/33	O63/C20F	Eastern Scottish, Northumbria, William McColl, Gartocharn
421	C593 JAT (665 EYL, C118 FKH)	DR130/24	O63/C20F	East Yorkshire

DELICENCED AS AT 13 NOVEMBER 1997

157	5227 DD (C757 CWX)	DR130/15	CH53/16D	West Yorkshire, Amberline, Yorkshire Voyager Travel
410	B225 VHW	DR130/3	O63/C18F	Wessex, Dunn Line, Nottingham.

STILL TO ENTER SERVICE

417	C907 GUD	DR130/21	Incomplete	Oxford Citylink, Taylor, Ditton
419	B119 ORU	DR130/3	Incomplete	Shamrock & Rambler, Target, Cramlington, Adkins, Daventry
420	C133 CFB	DR130/24	Incomplete	Wessex, Whitehead, Carterton
423	B223 VHW	DR130/3	Incomplete	Wessex, Essbee, Coatbridge

PREVIOUSLY OWNED/OPERATED

150	C810 JGR (KSU 466, C103 DYE)	DR130/29	CH53/17D	London Coaches, Busways
151	C811 JGR (KSU 465, C155 LJR)	DR130/28	CH55/17D	Busways
152	A502 FRS	DR130/4	CH53/16D	Western Scottish, Stewart, Dalmuir, McTavish
155	C755 CWX	DR130/15	CH53/16D	West Yorkshire, Amberline Taylor, Ditton
158	84 D 4064 (A760 VAF)	DR130/2	CH55/19D	Western National, Wessex Kirby, Eire
159	C159 UHN	DR130/10	CH55/17D	United, Northumbria, Kentish Bus
160	A487 SKL (KBC 193, A160 TGE)	DR130/2	CH53/16D	Western Scottish, Kentish Bus
161	C161 UHN	DR130/10	CH55/17D	United, Northumbria, Kentish Bus
162	UBR 276Y (SNU i22, JKL 714Y, XSV 691, TSX 1Y)	DR130/1	CH55/17D	Northern Scottish, Kentish Bus
163	C163 UHN	DR130/10	CH55/17D	United, Northumbria, Kentish Bus
424	A114 KBA	DR130/2	CH55/18D	National Travel (West), United, Northumbria, Ebdon, Sidcup
	A486 SKL (XSV 689, A116 KBA)	DR130/2	CH55/18D	National Travel (West), Northumbria, Kentish Bus
	C491 LOJ (245 DOC, C102 DYE)	DR130/29	CH53/17D	London Coaches, Central Coachways
	C492 LOJ (WLT 702, C101 DYE)	DR130/29	CH53/17D	London Coaches, Central Coachways
	C104 DYE	DR130/29	CH53/17D	London Coaches, Central Coachways
	SNU 122 (A120 KBA)	DR130/3	O63/C20F	National Travel (West), Shamrock & Rambler, Midland Red (North)

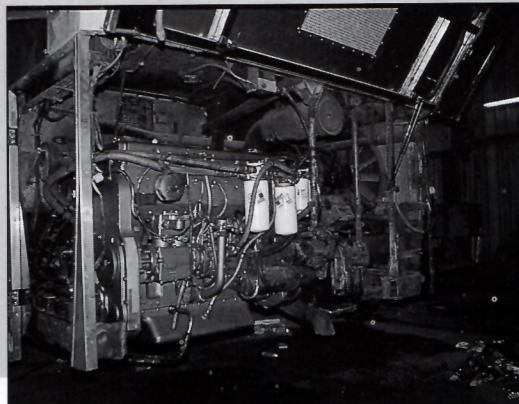
Disposals

Davidson, Harlow: C810 JGR
Eastonways, Ramsgate: C755 CWX, C811 JGR,
C163 UHN
New York Apple Tours: UBR 276Y, A114 KBA,
A487 SKL, B907 YVX, C104 DYE,
C491/2 LOJ, C159/61, UHN, 84 D 4064
PVS, Barnsley: A486 SKL
Southampton University: ???(SNU 122)

Notes

418 converted from dual-door, centre staircase layout
A502 FRS scrapped on site

Engine change. 420's factory-reconditioned Cummins L10 can be compared with the unit removed from the vehicle.



WHILST ON THE SUBJECT

CHRIS DREW looks at the MCW Metroliner 400GT, of which only three were built.

Pictures by the author.

If the market for double deck coaches hadn't dropped through the floor in the late eighties, I wonder if the MCW 400GT would have been a success.

Metroliner... the next generation?

Metro-Cammell Weymann launched its three-axle double-deck coach, the Metroliner, in 1982 and within a short time had 127 examples operating throughout the country with NBC companies in National Express/Rapide liveries, PTA operators like Tyne & Wear and West Midlands, London Coaches and the Scottish Bus Group. These vehicles quite literally raised the profile of luxury coach travel and were the most successful coach design produced by the company. On the crest of this wave the 400GT was born.

At the 1986 Motor Show MCW introduced the new model to the public. It was very different from the Metroliner — built as a fully integral vehicle and standing only 4m high with a view to sales on the continent and to independents in the UK. Other differences included the use of independent front suspension and an in-line engine with a simpler driveline. With the power source fitted lengthways, there was more space for a bigger engine. The one fitted to the show coach was a very powerful 15.5 litre Gardner 6LYT, but other options included the Cummins 14 litre, which at the time had a good reputation in the freight world.

The Metroliner had been given a functional modern look but on the 400GT the stylists were given some space. Many of the changes were subtle but effective. The biggest difference was the raked upper deck windscreen. This combined with its height gave it a look that many European designers would have found hard to beat.

Inside it was the same story. Reasonable head room (all things considered) on both decks, room for 77 passengers and their luggage. I was lucky enough to travel from Birmingham to London on the show coach in later years and had a very pleasant time.

Just two customers

After the show, the prototype, now registered D932 ODA, entered service with West Midlands on its London Liner service. Only

January 1998



two others were ever built. E906 TOJ joined the show coach with West Midlands, and E99 AAK, a surprise for Yorkshire Traction in National Express Rapide livery.

Much has been written about MCW's ups and downs since then and its eventual closure, but I for one think it a shame that the 400GT went no further. Maybe one day double-deck coaches will be back in fashion and someone like Optare could make it a contender again.

Top:
Seen when new, the second West Midlands Travel 400GT in London Liner livery, lays over in London, prior to making its return journey.

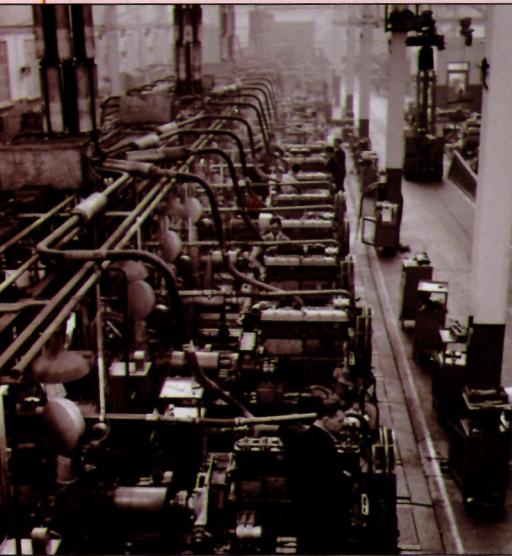
Above:
Odd man out was Yorkshire Traction 99 (E99 AAK), seen here in National Express Rapide livery.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Traditional busman's logic is that big engines, understressed, give best fuel economy and low running costs. But in recent years that logic has been turned on its head. R. G. CRAWLEY examines this trend

The use of small engines in buses is a concept which has been tried before with little success. Yet times have changed from the 1960s and 1970s, when the large engine dominated the bus industry. Today the standard single-deck bus in a large number of fleets is the Dennis Dart, which uses the 5.9 litre Cummins B-series engine.

The general preference amongst engineers was to have large engines derated to achieve long life, and by the mid-1970s the most commonly-



used engines in buses were the 11.1 litre Leyland O.680 and the 10.45 litre Gardner 6LXB. Both had been developed from slightly smaller engines, in the case of the Leyland the highly successful 9.8 litre O.600, used in the PD2 and PD3 range; the larger O.680 had been offered as an option in the larger, and heavier, Atlantean and later became standard. Meanwhile the 6LXB had grown from the 8.4 litre 6LW which had powered so many bus types during the 1950s and 1960s, though the LW range itself dated back to the 1930s.

Both engines worked well. In the Atlantean the O.680 produced 153 or 165bhp, though the same engine could be rated up to 200bhp in Leopard coaches; thus for bus work the engine was understressed. It had a one-piece cylinder block with separate cylinder heads. The Gardner 6LXB, also a good 'busman's engine', was remarkably long-lived and gave excellent fuel consumption. Its design was quite different from the Leyland; it had an aluminium crank case, separate cylinder block and two cylinder heads, in the same fashion as the LW range from which it was developed. The 10.45 litre 6LXB had an output of 177bhp at 1,850rpm.

Compared with the compact engines of the 1990s both were large and heavy; engine life depended on the environment in which it lived and how it was looked after, but both engines generally had a good reputation. Engine life was typically in the range of 350,000-400,000 miles, though many individual examples lasted far beyond that figure.

Changes in attitude

Many large companies had set, time-related maintenance procedures. Large central works would carry out regular overhauls of items such as injectors, fuel pumps and cylinder heads on a mileage-related basis. However such procedures had all but come to an end by the end of the 1970s. Oils were improving, and this reflected in engine condition and life. Maintenance systems were changing, with more attention at garage level, while pressure on reducing costs led to more efficient engineering. Components were changed on failure or when excessive wear was diagnosed.

Leyland's new single-decker of the 1970s, the Leyland National, hinted at things to come, with the 500-series engine from the truck industry. The same unit was also made available in double-deckers, the Bristol VRT Mk3, and featured in the Leyland Titan prototype. At 8.2 litres it was significantly smaller than the O.680, and embodied such unfamiliar features as turbocharging, an overhead camshaft and a combined head and cylinder block. For the British bus industry turbocharging was a novelty, and its legacy was the black smoke left behind by the bus before the turbocharger caught up as it pulled away from bus stops.

The 500 engine soon showed up its fragility, with much shorter life than had been enjoyed with previous generations of engines, and its other legacy was a lack of confidence amongst engineers in the merits of smaller engines. Indeed the next generation of buses reverted to larger engines; those old stalwarts, the Gardner 6LXB and the Leyland O.680, enjoyed a new lease of life and Leyland developed its turbocharged TL11 from the O.680. After a few problems, this engine, used in the Tiger coach and available in the Olympian, settled down to become a very reliable unit.

Yet the 500 wasn't the first attempt at reducing engine size. Both Leyland and AEC had used smaller engines in lighter-weight vehicles in the 1950s, and also tried them in larger rear-engined buses in the 1960s. Leyland's Panther Cub offered an alternative to the larger, O.680-powered Panther and had the 6.54 litre O.400, producing 125bhp at 2,400rpm. It suffered from

overheating and with its single head suffered from head gasket problems. AEC also used smaller engines in the Swift, but this too suffered from unreliability.

Lightweight buses from Bedford and Ford also enjoyed popularity during the 1970s. The Ford in particular was well-received by the Scottish Bus Group — but not by its engineers. Northern Scottish had the largest fleet of them, totalling 187. However life of the 5.8 litre engine was short and Northern's small central works was kept busy rebuilding them. The engines suffered from failures of head gaskets and turbochargers, which led to oil starvation and total seizure. Northern returned to the heavyweight Leyland Tiger in the 1980s.

One glimmer of hope for the smaller engine was Volvo's Ailsa, its front-engined double-deck chassis produced in Scotland, at the Irvine plant. This had the Volvo TD70 engine which was only 6.7 litres, yet despite its size it was uprated to give 201bhp at 2,400rpm — compared with the 10.45-litre Gardner's 177bhp at 1,850rpm. It confounded its critics by giving good engine life, much to the surprise of many bus engineers, and though sales outside Scotland never reached massive proportions it did prove that smaller engines could replace the big heavyweights beloved of busmen.

The coming of Cummins

The resurgence of larger engines in the early-1980s brought another newcomer, the 10-litre Cummins L10, already in use with the truck industry. Previously the experience of Cummins in the British bus world was limited to the disastrous performance of its V6 units in the Daimler Roadliner, but the L10 was a different kettle of fish. It introduced some new technology, with four valves per cylinder, unit injectors and turbocharging, but in other respects it was a more straightforward straight six. It was capable of giving up to 290bhp for coach applications, though a special bus variant was produced, rated at only 180bhp; this again reverted to the formula beloved of the bus world of an understressed engine capable of long life.

The production methods of the L10 were different from the old generation, which were hand built. The L10 was partly built by robots, which improved quality and obviated the need for the industry's standard six-hour test after overhauls. For the first time the Gardner 6LXB had a rival for fuel consumption, and in due course the L10 was to outlive both the 6LXB and the O.680-derived TL11. Moreover new emissions legislation was coming from Europe, requiring yet more new technology to clean up

exhaust gasses. The L10 was given new electronic management systems and a refined high-pressure injection system, and at the same time the cylinders were enlarged to give a capacity of nearly 11 litres. In this form it became the M11, and apart from a pilot fitting in an Olympian by Lothian its only application in bus work has been in the huge three-axle double-deckers, running at 24 tonnes, in Hong Kong. In Britain it was now realised that such engines, capable of coping with 38-tonners in the haulage world, were overkill.

Again this was a development driven largely by Cummins with its smaller Darlington-built C-series and B-series. At first the 5.9 litre B-series was seen as an engine for midibuses and while Bus Eireann used it successfully in a 10m rural single-decker, in Britain it made its debut in the MCW Metrorider. However it was also to appear in the Dennis Dart, at first a midibus, but as the Dart has expanded to become a full-size bus the diminutive B-series has proved itself well able to keep pace. In freight applications the engine is capable of producing up to 235bhp, though for buses in Britain the 160bhp version more than suffices.

Before its demise MCW was developing a new full-size rear-engined single-decker using the 8.2 litre Cummins C-series; again this engine was capable of producing up to 290bhp for coaches (indeed Euro 2 versions now top the 300bhp mark) and again could be derated to a very respectable 210bhp for bus use. The C-series was almost exactly the same swept volume as engines used in latter-day Bedfords, and it appeared in the Dennis Javelin which was seen initially as a rival to the Bedford. Today the Javelin is quite capable of working as a premium coach in a way Bedfords never could, and the C-series has also found applications in the full-size rear-engined Lance single-decker and its close relative, the Arrow double-decker. Dennis is also to use it in its forthcoming Trident 2 low-floor double-decker.

A virtuous spiral

The door was now open to design vehicles with smaller engines, both single-deckers and double-deckers. With privatisation and competition in the bus industry costs had to be reduced, which led to the widespread closure of central works and the consequential ending of traditional in-house engine overhaul. Service exchange engines are now the norm, with their consistent build quality.

At the same time running costs have had to be reduced, and lower weight leads automatically to lower fuel consumption. An industry 'rule of thumb' is that a tonne saved gives an extra mile per gallon.

The 160bhp Cummins B-series engine for instance weighs in at only 413kg, compared with 707kg for a 177bhp Gardner 6LXB. Use of the smaller engine means that smaller, lighter-weight — and cheaper — transmissions can also

be used, such as the Allison AT545, and there can then a reduction in component weight right through the bus. Chassis structures can be reduced in substance, with less weight to carry. Brake equipment for instance can be more compact, again with modern technology enabling smaller components to give a good operation life, and vehicles such as the Dart can thus cope with smaller wheels, again giving further weight and cost savings as well as producing the operational advantages of less wheelarch intrusion and a lower step height, particularly advantageous in the now almost-universal low-floor applications.

The Dart in particular has shown considerable weight and fuel savings, with it, it would appear so far, no detrimental effect on engine life. But it is not just the Dart which has followed this trend; Volvo responded with its B6, and Optare's Excel is a full-size bus powered by the B-series, while vehicles such as the Lance follow a very similar philosophy, albeit on a larger scale. Meanwhile

MAN's newcomer at Coach & Bus '97 was a full-size single-decker with a 6.9 litre engine rated at 220bhp.

Scania, Volvo and Mercedes-Benz all still offer buses with large engines, though even here future generations are likely to offer smaller units. Scania's standard 11-litre engine used in its 3-series bus range is set to be replaced with its new nine-litre in the 4-series, with its new 12-litre designed for premium coaches, while even Mercedes, now the main user of oversized, understressed engines, is starting to offer smaller engines.

With this new generation of engines has come improved overall vehicle design by computer, and the resulting improvements in cooling, air flow and pipework design, along with the use of modern oils, will lead to improved engine life, and there is no reason why small units should be any different from their large predecessors, if looked after properly. Engine warranty periods have increased relative to improved production standards. We do not live in a perfect world, and problems do still occur even on modern vehicles, though these are increasingly due to ancillary items rather than the engine itself.

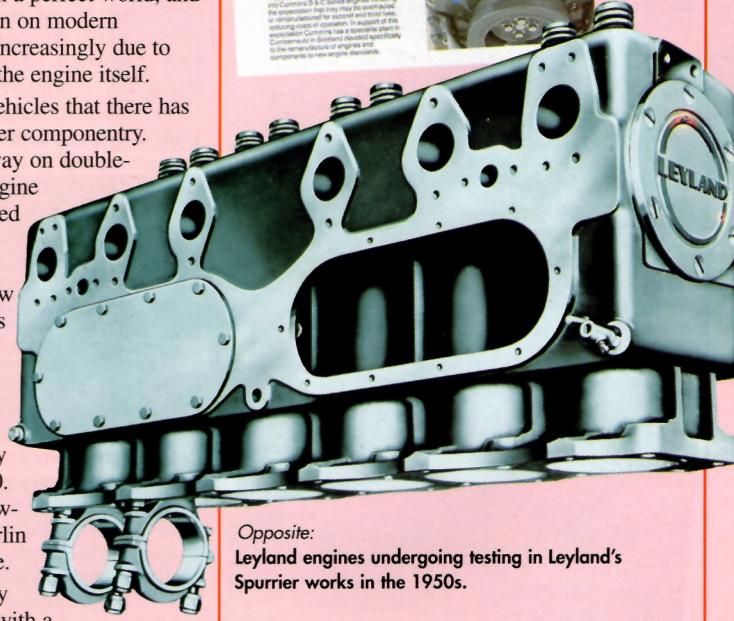
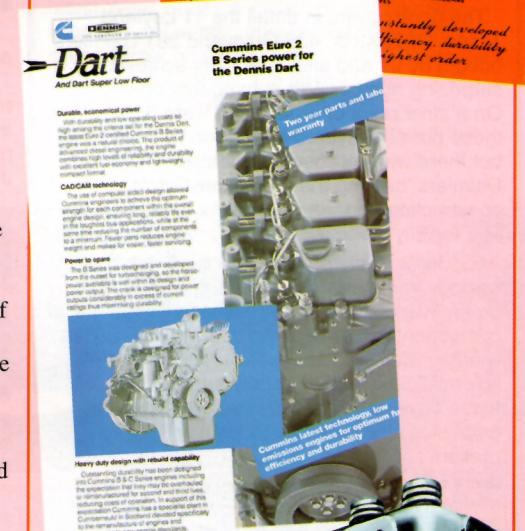
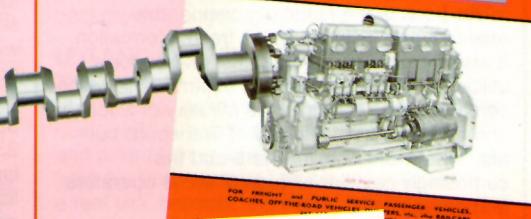
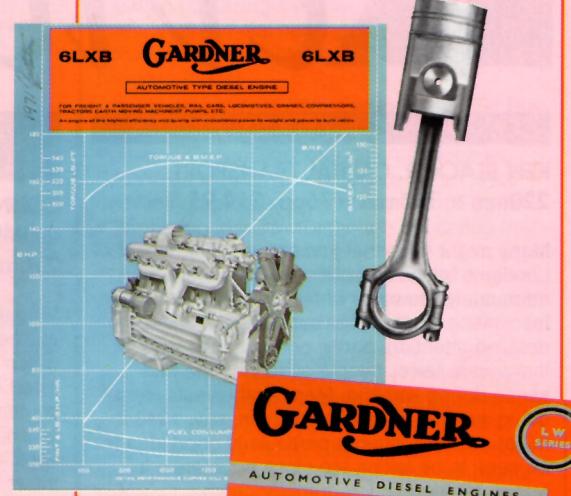
It is not just on smaller vehicles that there has been a drive towards smaller componentry. The DAF DB250 led the way on double-deckers with its 8.3 litre engine in place of the 0.680-derived 11.6 litre DTKL engine

which one might have expected, and Dennis is now using the 8.3 litre Cummins C-series in all its UK-spec double-deckers. It is even rumoured that Volvo's new low-floor double-decker has a small engine, possibly a development of the TD70. Meanwhile MAN's first low-floor double-decker for Berlin has only the 6.9 litre engine.

We have come a long way from the heavyweight bus with a large engine and its associated weight penalties. We have also come a long way from earlier

lightweight engines such as the Leyland 400 and the Ford R-series. Where will technology lead us next? Will sub six-litre engines appear in double-deckers?

What next — the throwaway engine?



Opposite:
Leyland engines undergoing testing in Leyland's Spurrier works in the 1950s.

Above:
The unusual combined cylinder block and head of the Leyland 500 engine.

Reviews

LONDON'S UTILITY BUSES

KEN BLACKER. CAPITAL TRANSPORT.

220mm x 310mm. 176pp. £19.95

Many might think that just about every aspect of London's buses had been covered more than adequately. However until now London's fascinating mix of utility buses have lacked detailed attention, partly, perhaps, because there were fewer people observing the bus scene during wartime. Many enthusiasts were doing war service and anyway in, say, 1943 it might not have been a particularly good idea to be seen to be taking too close an interest in buses, let alone photographing them.

This book is the result of considerable research and includes much fresh information. It also throws new light not just on London's utilities and the Government departments which controlled their building (the Ministry of Supply) and allocation (the Ministry of Transport) but also what went on elsewhere and the surprisingly cavalier attitude of some operators and groups.

The book covers in detail the 11 Leyland Titans, 29 Bristols, 435 Guy's and 281 Daimlers bought by LT and also later lives achieved by a surprising number with subsequent operators. On a strict point of order there were 656 of these buses delivered to London by April 1946, but there was a subsequent batch of 100 Daimlers 'bearing the characteristics of utility construction under a veneer of postwar decor' and logically these, D182-281, are also included.

London's utility bus era was fascinating, with its body variety, its red, brown, grey and later green liveries, and its sometimes strange mix of components such as wooden slatted seats but winding windows. This book recaptures splendidly the colour, variety and austerity of those days. If it's not too late, every London enthusiast should add it to his Christmas present list!

JOHN ALDRIDGE



LONDON COACH HANDBOOK

COLIN LLOYD, JEF JOHNSON & KEITH GRIMES. CAPITAL TRANSPORT.

210mm x 147mm. 216pp. £15.00

Virtually every coach operator within the area enclosed by the M25, plus a handful outside which have mainly London operations, are listed in the second edition of this handbook. Its content is remarkable; full details of the fleets of 143 operators from the man with just one vehicle to well-known names. The book reveals the remarkable range of types and sizes to be found in some of the fleets, from highly-standardised fleets to a four-vehicle operator with four different chassis and four different body makes.

As impressive as the actual listing is the photographic content; 128 pages containing 231 pictures, all in colour. The book details individual liveries as well as picturing many, and lists coaches painted in the colours of travel agencies and hotels.

Fleet lists have come a long way from the early days; Ian Allan's first offering, on London Transport, in 1945, for 2s (10p) didn't even give registration numbers. £15 may sound a lot for this book, but just think of all those colour pictures!

JOHN ALDRIDGE

MUNICIPAL BUSES IN COLOUR 1959-1974

REG WILSON. IAN ALLAN.

292mm x 216mm. 128pp. £19.99

Reg, (better known as R. L.), Wilson is a well established bus photographer, whose excellent work has appeared in numerous books and publications for longer than many of us care to remember! Never before has a bus book almost entirely of his photographs, and written by him been published, so one might say that such recognition is long overdue.

This all-colour volume, essentially a reference work, is packed with facts and figures concerning the 97 municipal operators to have provided bus and tram services within the United Kingdom during the period covered. Designed to be a book to dip into, it has one essential flaw — once you pick it up you won't be able to put it down! It is difficult to resist the temptation to check-out just one more operator, or to settle that one last niggling query over a date in the back of one's mind.

The book is essentially less about buses, but more about the municipalities who operated them. A page is given over to each, with a detailed chronological history to the present day. The emphasis is not so much on the vehicles operated, but angled towards the development of the service provided, and the changes brought about by the endless restructuring of local government, which has had so many profound effects on local bus services within our towns and cities. Each text is supported by two illustrations — one depicting a vehicle, chosen to demonstrate

Municipal buses in colour, London utility buses and recent Corgi OOCS

livery details clearly, the other a close up of the coat of arms, or other insignia carried by that particular authority's buses. The photographs, not always of vehicles considered typical of the operator, are virtually all of top quality and well reproduced to a good size. Tables, at the end of the book, detail just about every comparative fact about the 97 municipal operators that you'd be likely to want to know. Thus are listed fleet sizes in 1961, operators defunct by 1960, those no longer in existence in 1986, current status of the 1985 survivors and a summary of registration marks issued to municipal vehicles prior to 1974 — this last, hardly surprising — considering the author is also a noted authority, when it comes to registration marks!

All in all, it would be difficult to fault this work, and I recommend it unreservedly.

PHILIP LAMB

SHEFFIELD TRAMS IN COLOUR SINCE 1950

RICHARD WISEMAN. IAN ALLAN.

184mm x 240mm. 80pp. £12.99

This book conforms to the formula as established by the 'Heyday', and the 'Bus Scene in Colour' series, in its content falling somewhere between the two, but weighted strongly towards the original tramway system in the city which closed in 1960. Thus most of the photographs depict the final years of one of Britain's last traditional tramway systems, with some illustrating the construction of Sheffield's modern Supertram system, and subsequent operation thereof.

Richard Wiseman is one of a small band of photographers who had the foresight to record the closing years of the tramway era in colour, the majority of the excellent views being from his camera, supported by the equally competent work of the one or two other noted exponents of contemporary tramway photography. Informative captioning accompanies each photograph, grouped according to tram type, with many views taken in the attractive green and open environs near or at the out of city termini. As mentioned the book brings us right up to date with Supertram pictures.

Almost without exception the photographs are technically excellent, and when one takes into consideration how long ago the majority were taken, and the film technology available at the time, one cannot fail to be impressed by the overall quality of this attractive and informative book.

PHILIP LAMB

STAGECOACH CALENDAR 1998

This calendar features winners of this year's Commonwealth Children's Art Competition, a contest sponsored by Stagecoach, which attracted some 600 entries.

Each brightly-coloured month depicts transport through the eyes of the world's youth and an inset picture of Stagecoach companies transporting youngsters around the world.



This year Stagecoach has produced additional calendars for sale in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care. The cost is £3 per calendar and cheques should be made payable to South West Trains and sent to Jane Lee, South West Trains, CP7 3A, Friars Bridge Court, 41-45 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NZ.

A WINTER'S DAY AROUND WINCHESTER

FoKAB/KEN TARBOX. 40min running time £10.50

'The sights and sounds of the Winchester & East Hants Running Day' is the subtitle of this video, covering the 1 January 1997 King Alfred running day, and unlike last year's edition we really do get the sights and sounds this time — plenty of them in fact for those like the reviewer to whom the sound of buses is as important as the sight of them.

Once again this is very well put together, with an entertaining commentary from FoKAB chairman James Freeman. There are two particular highlights; one is the inclusion of some archive film showing some real King Alfred buses at work; the other is a textbook reverse round a very tricky corner by a Leyland Panther, driven by — well, modesty forbids... A good record of a day which was memorable, if only for the windchill factor!

Available from FoKAB (Sales), 13 Ashley Close, Winchester SO22 6LR; add £1.50 for p&p. Also available at the FoKAB running day at Winchester on 1 January.

STEPHEN MORRIS

CORGI ORIGINAL OMNIBUS

JOHN G. LIDSTONE reviews some of the more recent OOC 1/76th-scale bus models from Corgi

LEYLAND LYNX

It is always a pleasure to review a new casting that captures the flavour of the real thing and the new Leyland Lynx casting is one of these. Its first appearance is in Travel West Midlands blue, silver and red as its 1199 (G199 EOG) on service 18.

The distinctive front end of the Lynx with its split and recessed windscreens (with large pantograph wipers) is nicely captured. Louvred front grilles are both moulded and embellished with black decal lining. Happily, although many TWM Lynxes have had their front Leyland badges painted out, the model features a moulded shape, on to which is applied a silver decal. Sensibly, the blacked-out glass above the windscreens is gloss black, with very dark grey as the background to the indicator blinds, creating a realistic effect.

The heavy side mouldings are equally-well reproduced and were fairly heavily coated with paint on the review model. Side windows are again of the 'plasticard' variety, comprising a flat piece of clear glazing on to which matt black window pillars and ventilators are painted. Given the shape of the Lynx, this works well, except for the unsightly meeting of different parts of glazing and metal around the entrance doors, similarly to the Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer model.

Rear detailing is again good, with rear numeral display, correctly re-positioned rear registration plate, but a little let down with a rather amateurish-looking silver 'Leyland' decal.

All in all, a very pleasing model of the original-style Lynx, which is now also available in Wycombe's red, blue and white livery as its 305 (F560 NJM). As with many operators' Lynxes in mid-life, this model has the lower windscreens panel blacked out, whilst wheels are correctly all-blue, contrasting with 'as-new' versions with silvered trims. Livery is well applied, with radiator slats enhanced by black decals.

Following on from the Lynx casting is the more bulbous Lynx II, first released in Nottingham's attractive cream and green as its 759 (J759 DAU). The snouty appearance is nicely captured, with Leyland badge carried on a shaped plinth on the front grille — strangely, the silver decal on the rear goes awry in shape. Nottingham's livery is neatly reproduced, with excellent crests. As with the other Lynx casting, the area around the doors proves an awkward meeting-point for casting, clear and painted glazing material which detracts from the overall accuracy. The painted-on doors rather look so, as the colour does not quite match the metal body parts on this version too. Not an unpleasant model nonetheless.

OPTARE DELTA

The DAF/Optare Delta is now available in Trent Buses livery as its 314 (J314 BVO). Noticeable on this version is the silver-slatted front grille, bright tan-coloured interior and overly-large side fleetnames (but with front one omitted, no doubt due to difficulty of application in this position). This is quite a pleasing model as have been the others of this striking type, but a few detail inaccuracies detract for the purist.

Just as the only pair of DAF/Optare Deltas operated by Crosville has departed for pastures new with Northumbria, we now have an excellent reminder of them by way of the latest Delta casting featuring the second of the two, SDC702 (F702 ECC) on its regular haunt, the 94 service to Barmouth. Modelled in latest Crosville Cymru

green and white, livery application is excellent and suits the casting well. The yellow destination blind background adds to the effect, although on the review model, the yellow has crept a little low, on to the lower moulding of the display box.

As ever with the Delta casting, the awkward meeting of glazing material, painted glazing material and metal casting lets the overall accuracy down a notch or two, though it's a pleasing model.

It also looks most attractive in latest First Bus-style PMT red/yellow/black livery with 'The Potteries Connection' branding and logo as SAD806 (H806 GRE) on service X23. Livery detailing graphics are excellent — the First Bus f appearing in yellow (although appearing in contrasting silver on some vehicles of this fleet). The registration plate is featured in its original position, whereas many of this batch have them re-positioned above the front grille.

Perhaps the most garish scheme to appear thus far on this very satisfactory model is the Go-Ahead Gateshead Metrocentre Supershuttle scheme of red, blue, yellow and white with black trim as 54 (K760 SBB) on service X66 appropriately enough. Sensibly, the dot-matrix indicator displays are given a dark grey background, edged in black, to very good effect.

LEYLAND OLYMPIAN/ECW

This unhappy casting continues to look troubled, no matter what the livery — its overly heavy, mis-shaped upper saloon front dome and pillars taking away any pretence at realism from the front aspect. The casting inaccuracy is a real pity, because the livery application on the latest Wear Buses is excellent and opening windows are neatly represented by accurate silver decals on the glazing material. To be fair, from the rear aspect, the model looks quite satisfactory, however. But not from the front.

Guide price for all OOC models reviewed this month is £11.50 (courtesy Garry Donnelly of Rotherham Model World).



Above:
OOC's Travel West Midlands-liveried Leyland Lynx.



Left:
The Lynx II model in Nottingham City Transport livery.
BOTH:
JOHN LIDSTONE



Above:
Crosville Cymru and Gwynedd Council have created a Quality Partnership, under which the council has made a grant through the De Minimis provisions of the 1985 Act to enable Crosville Cymru, Berwyn and Clynnog & Trefor between them to place four new low-floor Dennis Darts on key commercial services. As yet there are no infrastructure implications, though the council hopes in due course to be able to provide new shelters and bus boarders. However as funding for the unitary authorities in Wales for public transport is reduced, this is an aim for the future.

One of Crosville Cymru's two Darts, LDC522 (R522 UCC), waits in Porthmadog on the Pwllheli service. The Darts were delivered in dealer stock white and have had the bilingual Quality Partnership branding added. The same branding is used on stops and timetables.

JOHN YOUNG

Opposite:
This former Eastern Counties Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard is now CL184 (LCL 806V) in the Kelvin fleet and, rather remarkably, has been painted to resemble the highly-decorated buses used in Pakistan.

BILLY NICOL

Main picture:

Open-top single-deckers are few and far between; Western Buses uses this Alexander Y-type-bodied Leyland Leopard, 106 (OSJ 636R) on Arran.

TONY WILSON

Below:

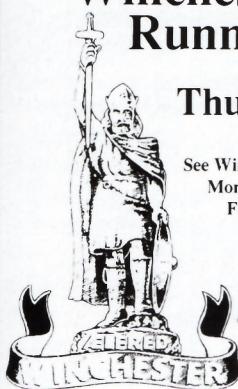
Cornish operator Hopley's of Mount Hawke has this Wright Endurance-bodied Volvo B10B, P87 SAF, seen in Truro in September last. The vehicle has been acquired with the assistance of a grant from the Rural Development Commission for its long-established Truro-Mount Hawke-Porthtowan service.

ERIC BALDOCK





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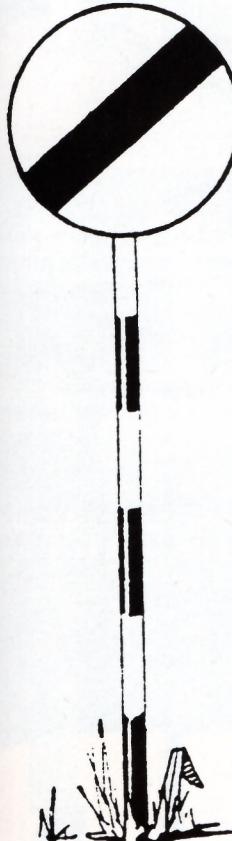
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PHILIP LAMB investigates a new offshore preservation project — the Isle of Wight Bus Museum.

When Southern Vectis decided at the end of the 1996 season to discontinue its 'heritage' services many were naturally disappointed. Lurking, however in the depths of the minds of a few Isle of Wight enthusiasts was the idea of a local bus museum. After all the Isle of Wight Steam Railway has proved to be a great success, not only with enthusiasts but also with the thousands of tourists attracted each year to the island, not to mention, of course local residents. It was not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that a museum dedicated to the history of the island's road transport would enjoy similar favour. The events we witnessed on 30 November certainly suggested that this notion was correct.

A bus museum is born

Earlier this year, and as a direct result of the local operator's decision outlined above, a new recruit to the slowly but surely increasing numbers of bus museums was created. A small but dedicated team is in the process of developing a collection of buses and coaches representative of those to be found on the island between 1924 and 1979. The help of both the Isle of Wight Council, which has provided, amongst other things, extremely suitable premises and Southern Vectis, whose 'heritage' vehicles form the nucleus of the working exhibits, and which has provided welcome sponsorship, is whole-heartedly acknowledged by the museum volunteers.

The museum is located on Newport Quay, a developing heritage area, and as such an ideal

location. By car, it is not however, easy to find; the simple solution is to follow signs from Newport to the Classic Boat Museum — no, that's not a typing error; this equally worthy venture, adjacent to the bus museum, has been established for a while now, and enjoys the benefit of comprehensive local signposting. The museum premises, consisting of two secure sheds, are leased from the council, the terms and duration of which are still to be finalised. The larger building is currently being used to store vehicles awaiting restoration, and as a running shed. For a new museum, there are an encouraging number of vehicles in running order, due in part to quite an active, but hitherto little known local preservation scene, and to the kind co-operation of Southern Vectis, whose five loaned vehicles were, until recently, maintained to class VI standard. Not too far along the quay is another smaller shed, which makes an ideal workshop to house vehicles undergoing active restoration.

Running day with a difference

The museum, which plans to open next year on Tuesdays and Sundays during the season, with a number of special events and operating days, has held a couple of running events already — these being quite modest affairs, when compared with the impressively organised running day on 30 November. Altogether 22 journeys were operated to a variety of destinations — one innovation here, to be applauded, was the building in to some of the services, most of which were circular, a visit to somewhere of related interest. Thus it was possible to spend a couple of hours or so at Havenstreet (IoW Steam Railway), or a pleasant 15 minutes looking at yet more buses. Derek Hunt, owner of superb ex-Seaview Services, all-Leyland lowbridge PD2 was more than happy to allow us into his premises to view VJW 882, a 1958 Duple-bodied Commer TS3, ex-Don Everall, and John Gange, of the exotically named Ganges Coaches, allowed us to stomp all over his premises on this Sunday afternoon. John has a penchant for old lightweights — 'You can't replace them!', he rightly states, and is the owner of amongst others, Bedford VAS/Duple Vista 25 FPR 705E, recently acquired from Lincolnshire operator Dennis Arnold (t/a Tumeys Taxis). However, being restored in the yard, with the kind of meticulous care and dedication, one normally associates with a preservation project, is long-term island resident (ex-Pauls Tours) HDL 255E, a 1967 Bedford VAM with Bella Venture bodywork by Duple, and LHO 420T, a 1978 Ford R1014, also bodied by Duple, this time a Dominant,

which began life on the mainland with Marchwood Motorways. It is John's intention to return both these elderly coaches to full revenue-earning service, once complete.

Another working would have taken you to the premises of John Goulding, proud owner of NG 1109 an Allweather-bodied Reo GE, which was present on the day. Also in his possession is DL 5084, a delectable 1924 Daimler CK, with Dodson body. Vehicles running on these services are highlighted in the table opposite.

With no shortage of bright ideas, a variety of sound, interesting vehicles and the degree of enthusiasm and dedication on display, there is surely a guaranteed future for this embryonic bus museum. We would like to thank all concerned for a splendid day, and especially Derek Hunt, and chairman Richard Newman for taking the time to talk to us, during what was for them a busy, yet highly successful running day.



Above:
Visitors on the day, Bristol VR SDL 368J, ex-Southern Vectis 628, now with Westbrook Travel, and PMM 393E, an ex-Inner London Education Authority Bedford VAS1, owned by Matthew Birkin of Ryde.

Opposite left:
Two of the more unusual vehicles seen on the quay towards the end of the day are 1931 Reo GE NG 1108 owned by John Golding, and Derek Hunt's immaculate ex-Seaview Services Leyland PD2 GDL 764.

Opposite right:
Open-top Bristol LD6G MDL 954, also ex-Southern Vectis and now owned by Derek Priddle, rounds the corner into Newport bus station.

ISLAND

BUSES

CURRENT MUSEUM RESIDENTS

SV FLEET NO	REGISTRATION	CHASSIS	BODY	NEW TO	YEAR
405	DL 9015	Dennis Ace	Harrington B20F	Southern Vectis	1934
721	EDL 657	Bristol K5G	ECW L55R	Southern Vectis	1947
	ODL 399	Bedford SBG	Duple C41F	Moss Motor Tours, IOW	1957
315	PDL 515	Bristol MW5G	ECW C39F	Southern Vectis	1958
563	SDL 268	Bristol LD6G	ECW H60R	Southern Vectis	1959
	SLT 278	Bedford SBG	Duple C41F	Bartlett	1956
565	TDL 998	Bristol FS6G	ECW H60RD	Southern Vectis	1960
611	CDL 479C	Bristol FLF6G	ECW H70F	Southern Vectis	1965
806	FDL 927D	Bristol MW6G	ECW B45F	Southern Vectis	1966
424	KDL 164F	Bedford VAM70	Duple C45F	Southern Vectis	1968
301	KDL 885F	Bristol RESH6G	Duple C45F	Southern Vectis	1968
126	TDL126S	Bedford YMT	Duple C51F	Southern Vectis	1977
	YDL 135T	Ford R1014	Duple B51F	Isle of Wight County Council	1978

VISITORS ON 30 NOVEMBER

NG 1109	Reo GE	Allweather C26D	Reynolds, Norfolk	1931	
702	CDL 899	Bristol K5G	ECW O56R	Southern Vectis	1939
	GDL 764	Leyland PD2/1	Leyland L53R	Seaview Services	1950
544	MDL 954	Bristol LD6G	ECW O60R	Southern Vectis	1958
573	YDL 318	Bristol FS6G	ECW H60RD	Southern Vectis	1962
	PMM 392E	Bedford VAS1	Willowbrook B26F	Inner London Education Authority	1967
628	SDL 638J	Bristol VRT/SL6G	ECW H70F	Southern Vectis	1971

EXPECTED TO JOIN MUSEUM COLLECTION SHORTLY

11	DL 5084	Daimler CK	Dodson B26R	Southern Vectis	1924
	AUF 666	Leyland TD3	Beadle H54R	Southdown	1934
903	CAP 234	Bristol K5G	ECW O56R	Brighton Hove & District	1940

Notes

Vehicles operating on 30 November in bold.

Vehicles are owned by both private individuals and Southern Vectis



HERITAGE

WANT TO KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR OLD BUS?



November was the month to pass on to a museum your elderly bus — in fact it happened three times! Travel West Midlands set the trend, when on 1 November, the last Leyland Fleetline in service passed into the care of the Aston Manor Transport Museum. Pictured here is Aston Manor's Mac Cooper, receiving the 'keys' of 7000 from David Leeder, Chief Executive of Travel West Midlands. STEPHEN MORRIS



Stagecoach Manchester was next on the scene on 29 November with a Leyland Atlantean, which was donated to the Greater Manchester Museum of Transport. When Stagecoach acquired GMS Buses, 275 Atlanteans were in service — this number has dwindled to around 25 in the main fleet, reflecting the large number of new buses, 300 in fact, introduced since the take-over. Dennis Talbot, pictured above, Chairman of the Greater Manchester Museum of Transport, received the keys of 4706 pictured right: from Les Warnford, Managing Director of Stagecoach Manchester. In return, as seen in the picture, Mr Warnford was given a photograph depicting three generations of Stockport buses. 4706 is shown also.

PHILIP LAMB



MEMORY LANE WIDENS SCOPE

Memory Lane Vintage Omnibus Services
(78 Lillibrooke Crescent, Maidenhead
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has recently expanded its range of services.
It now offers vintage bus and coach
restoration and repair services, including
chassis cleaning and silvering, and also
offers contacts with the film and tv world.

The company already has experience of
making vehicles available for film and
television work (and its recent successes do
not encompass coaches for *Heartbeat* to
roll!) and is prepared to use its contacts to
find work for other vehicles without
charging an advertising fee for them.
Owners wishing to get involved should send
an e-mail, a photograph of their vehicle and
some basic details of it to the company.

LT MUSEUM RESERVE COLLECTION TO BE REHOUSED

Following the grant of £2.75 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund the London Transport Museum is to go ahead with a project to make more of its collection accessible to the public.

Because of the size and scope of its collection the LT Museum cannot display everything at its Covent Garden premises, and it has numerous artifacts — including some buses, such as the 'Diddler' trolleybus, RM1 and FRM1 — currently tucked away in redundant LT property. However the Museum, one of the first to be designated as a 'pre-eminent' collection by the Museums & Galleries Commission, is pursuing a 'total access' policy, part of which is to make its reserve collection more accessible.

A new 6,586sq m Collections Centre is to be built next to London Underground's Ealing Common depot, a short walk from Acton Town Underground station, and in addition to housing up to 24 Underground cars it will hold 22 buses already part of the LT Museum collection and has space for a further 11. It will also house other objects, plus photographs, engineering drawings and posters. Such material will be available on computer at Covent Garden, while researchers will be allowed access to the Acton site, which will also hold public open days and will ultimately provide regular guided tours.

Not wishing to be left out, the Isle of Wight Council presented the newly established island bus museum, with a Ford R1014 school bus. A new era has dawned on the island with the establishment of Wightbus, a trading subsidiary of the council, set up to take over school work and some local bus work using low-floor Dennis Darts. We see here the redundant bus being handed over to Richard Newman of the island bus museum, by Cllr Barry Ford on behalf of the council. PHILIP LAMB



STILL TIME TO BOOK FOR KING ALFRED

The Friends of King Alfred Buses are once again running bus services in Winchester and West Hampshire on 1 January. Souvenir timetables are still available from the group at 71 New Road, Eastleigh SO50 8EN at £4.50 (£6 with vehicle working graph).

Meanwhile Memory Lane Vintage Omnibus Services (78 Lillibrooke Crescent, Maidenhead SL6 3XQ, tel/fax 01628 825050) can still take bookings for the Buses-sponsored Royal Blue Bristol MW trip to the Running Day; the return fare from London Victoria and Richmond is £7.50, and £3 from Basingstoke. The coach leaves London at 08.30 and expects to arrive at Winchester at 10.45.

WINKLEIGH OPEN DAY

The West of England Transport Collection at Winkleigh, Devon, is making progress towards establishing a charitable trust to take over the site from Colin Shears, its present owner and one of the founders of the Collection. Efforts are now being made to tidy up the site, which for years has been a haven for old buses awaiting restoration.

Winkleigh's annual open day in October has become one of the highlights of the rally calendar and this year attracted more visitors and vehicles than ever before. A new feature was a free vintage bus service linking the newly re-opened Okehampton Railway Station and Visitors Centre with this event, requiring up to five buses on each working, to meet the demand.

RUBBER FOR ROUTEMASTERS

The Routemaster Operators & Owners Association has commissioned the manufacture of window rubber for Routemasters. It is available to non-members at £2.35 per metre plus delivery; standard RMs require around 65m of the rubber. Details from Graham Lunn, RMOOA, 31 Pooley Avenue, Egham TW20 8AB.

NEW LIFE FOR TIGER

David Gambles is the proud owner of this ex-Chesterfield Leyland PS1. The Crossley-bodied Tiger, which made its first outing since restoration on 13 September, has subsequently attended the York Historical Vehicle Rally, and the Heart of the Pennines Rally. First registered in 1947, the bus continued in service with Chesterfield, until the 1960s, when it passed into private ownership. DAVID GAMBLES



This early ECW-bodied Bristol RESL, Red & White RS167 (LAX 101E), made its rally debut at the Lydney Road & Rail Show at the Dean Forest Railway in October (Buses December refers). It was withdrawn by National Welsh in 1984 and has emerged after having been laid up for 10 years. JOHN JONES

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43001	Leyland Olympian, Wear Buses	Oct	£11.50
43102	Leyland Lynx MK1, Wycombe Bus	Nov	£11.50

FIRSTBUS

40104	Weyman Trolleybus, Bradford Corporation	Aug	£10.95
42905	Optare Delta, P.M.T.	Sept	£11.50

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41801	Leyland Breakdown, Ribble	Sept	£11.50
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43202	3 Axle Leyland Olympian, Cowley Canton Railway	Aug	£15.99
42803	Dennis Dart, Citybus (Standard)	Sept	£11.50
43206	3 Axle Leyland Olympian, China Motor Bus Co	Sept	£13.49
42707	Van Hool Alizee, Citybus (Standard)	Dec	£11.50
43201	KMBC	Sept	£29.99

COWIE GROUP

42906	Optare Delta, Crossville	October	£11.50
42804	Dennis Dart, Stevensons of Uttoxeter	Oct	£11.50
43006	Leyland Olympian, North Western Bee Line	Dec	£11.50

INDEPENDENT OPERATORS

40306	Burlingham Seagull Coach, Happyway Tours Ltd	July	£10.95
42805	Dennis Dart, Plymouth Citybus	Aug	£11.50
42201	Guy Tower Wagon, Birmingham City Transport	Aug	£11.50
43104	Leyland Lynx MK1, Nottingham City Transport	Sept	£11.50

GO-AHEAD GROUP

42809	Dennis Dart - VFM	Jan	£12.50
43301	Plaxton Premiere - Oxford City Link (Poseable Wheels)	Feb	£13.50

STAGECOACH GROUP

43107	Leyland Lynx MK1 - Stagecoach Transit	Feb	£12.50
43402	Plaxton Beaver - Stagecoach Manchester	Mar	£11.50

FIRSTBUS

43108	Leyland Lynx MK 1 Beeline	Mar	£12.50
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FOCUS ON WALES

40307	Burlingham Seagull Coach - N&C	Mar	£11.50
43302	Plaxton Premiere - Express Shuttle (Poseable Wheels)	Mar	£13.50

CELTIC COLLECTION

42506	Bedford OB & Quarterlights - Loch Tay Trundler	Jan	£11.50
42907	Optare Delta - Edinburgh Transport	Jan	£12.50
41501	Aec Breakdown Lorry - MacBraynes	Feb	£11.50

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42807	Dennis Dart, The Bee Line	July	£11.50
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Forthcoming Events

Spring Festival

Owing to operational reasons the Festival will now be on 28th & 29th March 1998.

We are open at Christmas 27th & 28th December 1997 and on New Years Day.

If you would like to join our active and friendly society and take part in museum life, please contact - John Harrison for an introductory pack. Volunteers are most welcome on Wednesday evening or Saturday (please ring first).

On the subject of blue paint, 205 (EJR 105W) is freshly repainted in traditional Blue Bus livery. 81-3/91 (L81-3 YBB, N91 RVK) now carry National Express Flightlink livery, 89 (H203 CRH) having been on loan to cover for the necessary mini-repaint programme for them.

Now withdrawn are Leyland Atlanteans 302 (VCU 302T) and 500/32 (MVK 500/32R).

The remaining seven Bristol REs, reported due for final withdrawal by Christmas, are ex-Colchester RELL6Ls 1811/3-6 (YWC 18L, OWC 722/3M, SWC 25, 26K) and ex-Thamesdown RESL6Gs 1817/20 (JMW 166/9P).

Although an unspecified number of 1985/86 Leyland Olympians have been advertised for sale in the trade press (as mentioned last month), the company has stated that this is an experiment to test the secondhand market, such that if no suitable offers are forthcoming, the vehicles will remain in stock.

Former driver trainer Leyland Titan PD3A DT6 (CJF 72C) ex-Leicester remains at PVS, Barnsley (dealer). DT1 (MJA 888G), one of the final batch of rear-entrance Titan PD3s delivered new to Stockport, has now been secured for preservation by a new owner in Crewe, whilst another ex-Leicester trainer, DT5 (CJF 69C) is with an owner in Winlaton, also in preservation.

Cambus ST

New arrivals are Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 B37F 353-6 (R353-6 LER) in red and cream for Park & Ride services, thus releasing the borrowed Leyland Titans.

New deliveries due for this January/February are expected as 10 Volvo Olympians and an equal number of Darts. These will see the demise of all but five examples of the Bristol VRT/SL3 at Peterborough and will leave just four at Cambridge, mostly for school contract and low-revenue work.

All Leyland/Volvo Olympians are now smartly turned out in corporate livery.

Capital Citybus

A further East Lancs Pyoneer-bodied Dennis Arrow is 426 exhibited at Coach & Bus '97. It is understood that a further 26 of this type are on order.

Mercedes-Benz 811D 618 (J618 HMF) is now route-branded for service 318.

CentreWest FB

Acquisitions are Leyland Olympian ON2R50CZ4/Alexander RH H45/29F LA24-8 (L24-8 GAN), ON2R50C13Z4/Northern Counties H47/30F LN29, 31/4/5/8, 40/1/3 (H129 FLX etc) and ONCL10/1RZ/Alexander RL H47/28F LA46-53 (G46-53 XLC), all from London Buslines following an exchange of operations by CentreWest. They join sisters LN33/6/7/9, 42/5 and LA54 already here. Repainted examples are now appearing in red with yellow central band and Challenger fleetnames. LA27, LN30/2 and 44 were retained initially by London Buslines, LA55 going on loan to Orpington later.

AEC Routemaster refurbishment pilot RML2735 (SMK 735F) has been out of traffic for accident repairs, such that a new A-frame was required — it is now back, fully repainted and sporting the new CentreWest/FirstBus logos.

Moving the opposite way to London Buslines are now-withdrawn Dennis Darts L225-39 (N225-36 TPK, P237-9 NLW). Mercedes-Benz 811Ds MA47 and 87 (F947 BMS, F687 XMS) have passed to Strathclyde Buses.

Cheltenham District ST

New are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliner C49Ft 550-4 (R550-4 JDF) and IVECO 49.10/Mellor B17F 613/4/6 (R613 KDD etc).

An acquisition to record is Leyland National 2 NL106AL11/1R/B44F 392 (LFR 861X) from Swindon & District. Loaned Swindon & District 712/4/6 (M712/4 FMR, N716 KAM) returned by early October.

Now withdrawn are Ford Transit 190Ds 631/42 (C631/42 SFJ) and Volvo B10M-60s 546/7 (G546/7 LWU). 631/42 and similar 643 (C643 SFH) are now with T. J. Walsh of Halifax, Transit 637 (C637 SFH) passing to Washington Printing of Cheltenham (for private use). 546/7 have been transferred to Circle Line, Gloucester.

Chester City Transport

Further Dennis Dominators to be withdrawn are 140/1 (MPN 140/1W) new to Eastbourne.

Clarkson, South Elmsall

New Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B40F P881 PWW is a standard Dart and not an SLF.

County Bus & Coach AA

New arrivals are 10.2m Dennis Dart SLF/Wright Crusader B36F SLF169/70 (R169/70 GNW). The order for low-floor Northern Counties DAF36F-bodied DAF SB220s for service 724 is now increased from five to nine.

Recently-acquired MCW Metrobuses M1443-5 (GBU 1, 4, 5V) are now numbered M1, M4 and M5. Further of the same are ex-Leaside DR101/6/MCW H43/30F M8, 9 (GBU 8, 9V). From South London comes DAF SB220/Ikarus Citibus B48F DIB124 (K124 TCP).

Wests-liveried MCW Metroriders are now a common sight on Harlow town services, but MR667, 714 are now in Townlink livery; LR10, 23 are now in cream and red as per LR7, M372 donning green and cream. Metrobus M474 (GYE 474W) is back with South London off-loan. East Lancs-rebodied Volvo saloons VEL855-61 have been very quickly dispensed with and are at Colchester as previously mentioned, whilst DP547/8 are with South London.

Cumberland ST

New coaches are Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton Interurban C53F 791/2 (R791/2 PAO) carrying a special new livery of royal blue, light blue and white for service 685 (Carlisle-Newcastle), but without any fleetnames, initially at least. Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RZ/Duple C48Ft 1149 (PSU 788, B146 ACK) is now in stock from Ribble in Stagecoach Express livery.

Cygnets, Dorton

Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Alexander AY B53F 27/8 (BSJ 914/8T) have been taken into stock from Clydeside, rather than ex-Mainline Leyland National 2s KWA 26/9W as intended. Also in stock are MCW Metrorider MF150/82/B23F 25 (E983 DNK) from the Shires and similar MF150/52/B23F 30 (E130 SNY) from Black Prince, Morley (new to Cardiff), the latter initially put to work in allover white.

Bristol LHS 14 (GTX 761W) has now passed to Rapson, Brora, Leyland Leopard 18 (PTV 586X) to Riggott, Kinsley, 19 (PTV 591X) to Confidence, Oadby, whilst similar 7, 16/7 (ERB 534T, ARB 132T, PTV 585X) are due for early withdrawal. Dodge E497 HHN was allocated fleetnumber 24 but passed to Martin, Middlewich (dealer) prior to carrying it, in part exchange for newly-acquired 25 mentioned above.

Dennis Dart 23 (P829 BUD) has been returned to Dawson Rentals, Milton Keynes (dealer) off-loan.

Delaine, Bourne

The latest brand new long-wheelbase 10.3m Volvo Olympian/East Lancs E-type H51/35F 127 (R4 OCT) is now in stock, reported delivered extremely appropriately on 4 October . . . ! Good news is that a fifth identical Olympian is now on order for delivery next August.

The refurbishment programme to bring the four recently-acquired ex-Greater Manchester Leyland Atlanteans up to the usual house style continues with 123/4 (ORJ 384/65W) completed, 126 (ORJ 362W) is due to be finished by end-November, after which 125 (ORJ 380W) will be started.

Former Whippet Leyland Atlantean AN68/2R/Northern Counties 95 (HFL 672L) has been withdrawn and has passed to a private owner in Sutton Coldfield for preservation. Former Greater Manchester Atlantean 99 (GDB 179N) has also been withdrawn but has been placed in store.

I am grateful to Managing Director A. Delaine-Smith for the continued supply of news of his distinctive fleet.

Docklands Minibuses, West Thurrock

This new company, not to be confused with Docklands Transit, operates six Ford Transits, N205-9 YJM, P597 YOD, on the Docklands Reuters contract.

East Kent ST

Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW CO43/31F 7621 (UWV 621S) is on loan from South Coast Buses at Ashford, Leyland National 13351/1R/B52F 103 (AVJ 103T) and similar, but B48F 182 (YCD 82T) are at Thanet on loan from Hampshire Bus. Stagecoach South Group unallocated ex-East London Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR/Leyland H44/27F 7272 (NUW 672Y) is also on loan here and has been noted at various locations.

AEC Regent V MFN 944F was noted recently in stock with Hoare, Chepstow (dealer).

East London ST

Deliveries of new stock continue apace with the receipt of the remaining VA-class Volvo Olympian/Alexander H51/28D due, as VA62-81 (R162-81 VPU); an additional pair of 10.25m Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 B29D LCY8, 9 (R208/9 XNO) for the London City Airport service along with Dart/Plaxton B37D PD1-18 (R701-18 YWC). Fifty-seven further Olympians are due for services 48, 55, 56 and 277.

The first of the AEC Routemasters back from Perth to appear in service is RM980 (USK 625, WLT 980) at Upton Park but there is no news of any withdrawal of the rare forward-entrance RMA5, 8 — the only two in normal service in the Capital. Upton Park RMLs are now passing through a second post-refurbishment repaint and are thereby of above-average appearance, enhanced by their superb livery.

Leyland Titans 3, 647/51/66/71, 840 are back from loan to Metrobuses of Orpington.

Now withdrawn and sold are MCW Metrorider MRL144 (H144 UUA) to Fleetlink of Liverpool, Dennis Darts DRL112/20 (K112/20 SRH) and Titans T439/98, 501/4/58/60, 647/71 (KYV 439/98, 501/4X, NUW 558/60, 647/71Y) to Selkent, T566/75/7/87, 626 (NUW 566Y etc) to Fife Scottish, T619 (NUW 619Y) to Red & White and T659, 826/46 (NUW 659Y, A826/46 SUL) to Transit.

East Yorkshire EY

Bristol VRT/SL3s 511/8/22 and 717/25/30/50/67, rebodied Leyland Atlantean 920 and Olympian 548 received maroon and cream livery during the school holidays.

Seven AEC Routemasters still remain in stock here; in the limelight of late have been the three open-top examples, used at Scarborough — 812/6/9 (ALM 65B; CUV 210C; EDS 221A, 10 CLT), but less well publicised are roofed 801/2/8/17 (NRH 801/2A, WLT 732/98; VLT 188; LDS 239A, WLT 727) retained on fleet strength but stored.

On order for spring/summer delivery are 10 11.7m B47F Optare Excels for Hull, five 10.7m B41F Excels for Scarborough and nine Plaxton Beaver 2-bodied Mercedes Varios, probably B25F (though possibly B27F) for Bridlington and Scarborough.

Group codes

AA	Arriva Passenger Services
BL	Blazefield Holdings
EY	EYMS Group
FB	FirstBus
GA	Go-Ahead Group
MT	MTL Holdings
NX	National Express
ST	Stagecoach Holdings
TR	Transit Holdings
YT	Yorkshire Traction

Opposite:
Cardiff's Optare Excels entered service on 2 November. Seen here on driver familiarisation duties prior to that is 202 (R202 DKG). JOHN JONES

Left:
Demonstrating the current trend towards using ex-MoD vehicles as school transport, and looking a little 'North American' in its bright yellow livery is YJN 166, a Marshall-bodied Leyland Tiger of Tourex, Oxford (t/a The School Bus Company). DAVID LONGBOTTOM



The Eden Bus Services AA

Inter-company transfers within the North East Bus Group see the arrival of MAN 11.190HOCL/Optare Vecta B42F 1514 (K514 BHN), Mercedes-Benz L608D/Reeve Burgess B20F 2465 (D465 EAJ) and Leyland Lynx LX2R11C15Z4S/B49F 5001 (G508 EAJ) from United stock.

Now withdrawn are Leyland Nationals 3502/3 (RJI 5344, 5755), which have gone on loan to Tees and Middlesbrough. Renault-Dodge S46 2552 (F363 BUA) has been sold.

Epsom Buses

For newly-awarded London Transport service S4, three UVG-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario minis are imminently due, whilst for re-assigned LT services S1 and 413 (previously worked by London General), Optare MetroRiders H681-4/6 YGO (ex-MRL181 etc) and six more are coming into stock here, bringing the total fleet to an all-time high of 33.

Coach 602 (F517 GGH) has been withdrawn and sold. I am grateful to Operations Manager James Prince for kindly sending these notes of his fleet, Epsom Buses being welcomed to the select number of operators sending source data to 'Fleet News'.

Go-Ahead Group North East GA

Fifty new vehicles are due in stock during 1998, the majority low-floor. Wear Buses will receive 26 low-floor vehicles of several types, whilst Northern is due for eight with six going to Coastline. Gateshead is to receive seven new double-deckers, Northern National three Expressliner coaches.

All Go-Ahead North East vehicles repainted are now being outshopped in the new corporate pale blue and red scheme as illustrated in 'Pictureview', *Buses* November. Early recipients are 3631/77, 4756/60 and 8402, all with Go-Gateshead fleetnames.

The initial MCW Metrobus DR101/12/MCW H43/28D acquired for trials from London General, M236 (BYX 236V) is now formally taken into stock here and is converted to single-door layout as H43/29F, numbered 3680 and allocated to the Northern fleet at Chester-le-Street.

A further Leyland National 2 to benefit from major rebuild and refurbishment is 4716 (TJR 716Y), losing its roof pod in the process. Metrobus MKII 3648 (A648 BCN), ex-Wear Buses and Volvo B6-50s 2401/2 (L401/2 FVN), ex-OK Travel are transferred to Gateshead & District stock, the B6s also renumbered to 8401/2.

Quality Bus Engineering is now renamed Grandforce Ltd and, as such, has acquired Dennis Lancet SDA516/Alexander B53F A502/3 FSS from Redby of Sunderland, now numbered 4799, 4800 'on paper'. Both have gone straight into store and are thought unlikely to run for the Go-Ahead Group.

Northern National Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton 7060 (N760 RCU) is now re-registered CU 6860. OK Travel DAF MB230/Duple 9703 (CU 6860, G703 AEF) is now re-registered UGD 735 and Leyland Atlantean AN68/1R/Alexander 9735 (UGD 735, JKW 279W) is now back to its original mark JKW 279W again.

Wear Buses has had Eastbourne Buses DAF DB250/Northern Counties H47/30F 41 (M441 CCD) on loan, based at Sunderland.

I am indebted to the Northern Group Enthusiasts Club for kindly making its detailed illustrated news-sheets regularly available to 'Fleet News', from which a wealth of useful notes appear in these columns.

The news-sheets cover all the major north-east fleets in the erstwhile Northern area in much greater depth than there is space for here and readers are thus warmly recommended to this source for further material on these fleets. For details, please send an SAE to the Secretary, The Northern Group Enthusiasts Club, C. J. Redpath, 4 Lakeside, Axwell Park, Blaydon-on-Tyne NE21 5PF.

Greater Manchester FB

Deliveries of further new saloons are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B37F 6026-55 (R226-55 SBA) at Wigan (6026-39), Bolton (6040-9) and Bury (6050-5) along with Volvo B10BLE/Wright B41F 572-9 (R572-9 SBA), of which 572/5-9 are also at Wigan. 572 was exhibited at the recent Coach & Bus Show at Birmingham NEC prior to delivery. At least 6044-55 carry the new Pointer 2 body, but 6026-43 are not confirmed as of the new style.

Further new vehicles due to be allocated to Atherton are Dennis Darts 6070-80 and Volvos 580-91 whilst Bolton will have Darts 6058/69 and Bury Darts 6056/7. MCW Metrobus DPs 5314/7/8/20 (D314 LNB etc) are back in stock, having been unused by PMT.

Further vehicles outshopped in the new ivory-based livery, now quoted as ivory/purple/blue are 552/71/3/4, 6026-44, with 557/9-1/2/2/2 reported as in pearl/purple/blue (probably the same livery!). 573-9 have been placed in service in all-over cream initially, as have Darts 6026-55 which are apparently to be branded 'Gold Service' in a styling similar to Midland Bluebird replacing the previous Superbus branding. All previous Superbus vehicles are losing their yellow-banded livery, the yellow being replaced by a purple band.

Further withdrawals are of Leyland National 2s 105/7/62-4 (XTJ 5, 7W, CKB 162-4X), Volvo B6s 1045/6 (N345/6 CJA), Iveco 59.12 1414 (M414 RND), MCW Metroriders 1616/25 (D616/25 MDB), Leyland Fleetlines 4106/8/11/23/5/43/7, 4953/72 (HDB 106/8/11/23/5/9, MNC 486/90W, YTE 590V, DWH 688W) and Leyland Atlanteans 4378, 4426/43, 4737, 4953/72 (ORJ 378W, SND 426/43X, A737 NNA).

Now sold are 1045/6 to Eastern Counties (via loan to Kingfisher Huddersfield and with a brief reappearance at Queens Road on return), 4556 and 4737 (N345/6 CJA, ANA 556Y, A737 LNC) to Yorkshire Rider, 4299 (ANA 229T) to PVS, Barnsley (dealer) for scrap, 105/7 (XTJ 5, 7W) passing to unconfirmed buyers.

Grey-Green AA

The last MCW Metrobus, ex-Newport 466 (DTG 366V), has now bowed out and been sold to County Bus.

Halton Transport

Further new midis are Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall Capital B42F 84-86 (R401-3 XFL). Leyland Lynxes 8, 9 (F687 YWM, F81 STB) are now with Isle of Man Transport as MAN 89, 90F.

Hartlepool Transport ST

The first minibuses here are acquisitions from Stagecoach Darlington in the shape of Renault S75/Plaxton Beaver B28F 371/2 (J231/2 JJR), initially used on ASDA special services but now in general use. The pair is now bolstered by similar 363 (H401 DMJ), which has Reeve Burgess Beaver B29F bodywork, but the type is to be short-lived — to be ousted by Leyland Lynxes transferred from Transit stock imminently.



AAE 653V, ex-Brewers, is now with fellow FirstBus subsidiary Southampton Citybus. One of two similar Leyland National 2s allocated to the Hants & Sussex operation, it is seen here in Havant Bus Station.
PHILIP LAMB

Further acquisitions are Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR/Leyland H44/29F 270-3 (NUW 604/6/34/42Y) from East London, freshly converted from dual-door H44/24D layout prior to delivery here. They are due to oust Fleetlines 131-4 (GAJ 131-4V). Between six and eight Leyland Lynxes are due in stock from Transit, which will sadly bring the chapter of the Bristol RE to a close here, the remaining five Bristol RELL6s being reported due for final withdrawal by November — 74, 77, 89, 93 and 96 (OEF 74, 77, GEF 189N, JAJ 292/3N). These are also the last vehicles in Hartlepool livery, all other vehicles having been repainted in Stagecoach corporate livery. Two further REs have recently been withdrawn, these being 81 and 87 (SEF 81L, GEF 187N).

Whiting, Ferrybridge (dealer) has taken Dennis Falcons 524/6 (YDC 24, 26Y), leaving the three refurbished examples 521/3/5 for a while longer.

Five Volvo B10Ms are due in February/March 1998 as replacements for the Mk1 Leyland Nationals, but reserved registrations booked for B10Ms diverted — P554-8 FEF — have been voided.

Kingston-upon-Hull City Transport ST

Reserved registration marks P719-26 SKH for Volvo B10Ms due as 719-26 here, have now been surrendered, with replacement new vehicles now expected in February/March (see under Transit heading). New Darlington 'Stagecoach Express' Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Première Interurban C51F 83 (R83 SEF) was on loan for a few days to cover for accident-damaged 78 (P178 PRH).

Refurbishment of Scania 705 (F705 BAT) is now completed, this remarkably long-lived programme having now dealt with all six of these East Lancs-bodied N112s 701-6 (F701-6 BAT).

The programme to repaint vehicles from Hull livery into corporate Stagecoach colours continues, with 57 out of the fleet total of 110 now treated (71-3/6-81, 213/26/32/4-7/9/41/50/4/5, 343-54, 701/4-7/9/13/4/6, 802-4/6-12/7-9).

MCW Metrobuses 515-7/9-21/3 and 119 (LAT 515V, SAG 516/7-9/21/3/9W) have been withdrawn following service changes on 5 October. 516 has been cannibalised and 515/6 have now passed to Whiting, Ferrybridge (dealer). Only seven Metrobuses now remain in stock, comprising 518/22, 114-8 (SAG 518/22/4-8W). Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 341/2 (N341/2 KK) have been rendered surplus by the service changes and are expected to be reallocated elsewhere. The Leyland Atlantean exhibition bus, 284 (WKH 284J) is now in store at Stockton, ex-driver trainer Leyland Leopard 502 (89 BBC) being sold straight from Stockton storage to Galaxy Travel of Redcar.

All vehicles' legal ownership details were due to be changed from Kingston-upon-Hull City Transport Ltd to Cleveland Transit Ltd on 1 November.

Leyland Atlantean DRH 324L is now with Bailey Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, with roof removed and upper deck covered by tarpaulin. It was noted parked up at the Heathrow Coach Park, just off the Perimeter Road.

Lakeland, Hurst Green

New is Scania L113CRL/East Lancs R672 NFR. Former Burnley & Pendle service 105 (Clitheroe-Longridge Chipping) is now being operated.

Leaside Buses AA

MCW Metrobuses M1446/7 (GBU 8, 7V) have been withdrawn and sold to County Bus. A new fleetname with 'Lea' in white and 'side' in yellow is now being applied.

Lincoln City YT

Now in stock from Road Car are Leyland Atlantean AN68D/Northern Counties H43/32F 1341/6 (ANA 601, 546Y) whilst ECW-bodied sisters 1385/9 (TRN 485/69V) have appropriately gone to traditionally ECW-oriented Road Car stock.

London & Country AA

The first six of the current order for 12 Dennis Dart SLFs with Plaxton Pointer bodywork are DSL97-100 (R297-9, 310, 301/2 CMV), of which DSL97-100 are in Guildford Link park & ride green and yellow livery, DSL101/2 wearing standard L&C colours.

Acquisitions maintain the Dominator theme, in the shape of ex-North Western DDA1031/East Lancs H47/29F DD17, 18, 20-22 (G626/8 EKA, G663-5 FKA) and DDA1026/East Lancs DPH43/25F DD19 (F631 BKD), all initially at Crawley.

A farewell tour for the Leyland Atlantean was made using AN262 (KJP 262W) on 28 September last.

Leyland National 2s 277 and 3831 (BVP 813V, EON 831V) are now with Midland Fox, not The Shires as first expected and Leyland Royal Tiger Doyen TC776 (776 WME) has passed to Ripley, Carlton (dealer).

London Buslines FB

Now in stock from CentreWest are Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B35F L225-39 (N225-36 TPK, P237-9 NLW) of which L225-36 remain in London & Country ownership (having passed to CentreWest to operate in 1996). These are due to be replaced in February by new Darts on order for service 105.

Moving to CentreWest in exchange are Leyland Olympians LA24-6/8 (L24 GAN etc), LN29, 31/4/5/8, 40/1/3 (H129 FLX etc) and LA46-53 (G46-53 XLO); Bee Line now has LA55/6 (G55/6 XLO) replacing the last Bristol VRT/SL3s.

London Central GA

New deliveries comprise Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties H47/27D NV62-5 (R262-5 LGH) and 10m Dennis Dart/Plaxton Pointer B36F LDP45-49, 51-70 (R445 LGH etc).

Further, recent NV58/60 have coach seating and so should be recorded as DPH47/27D.

The AEC Routemaster fleet — the last major allocation in London retaining AEC AV590 engines — is now starting to appear with new Scania engines. Apparently the removed AEC engines are being sold off.

Wholesale withdrawal of older Leyland Titan stock has taken place, with the delicensing of T185/6, (CUL 185/6V), 227 (EYE 227V), 292, 310/2/23/36/56/96, 507, (KYN 292X etc), 676, 705/7/12/20/2/3/39/55/65/76/88/92/4, 808/11 (OHV 676Y etc) 875 (A875 SUL), 886/91, 916/20/33/62-4/75/86 (A886 SYE etc), 1020/49 (A630/49 THV). T172 (CUL 172V) remains active as a driver trainer at New Cross.

London Coaches

A new coach received is DAF SB3000/Ikarus C53F R716 GNW in all-over red North Kent Express colours. Interestingly, Western Buses articulated Volvo coach 199 (P199 OSE) has been run over the Gravesend-London corridor, but not carrying passengers.

Further MCW Metrobuses are now in stock, with DR101/3/MCW H43/30F UKA 20V, DR103/2/MCW H43/30F UKA 21-23V ex-MTL and DR102/10/MCW H43/30F MNC 494/7W from Stagecoach Manchester stock, all via Blue Triangle of Rainham (dealer).

Ramp-equipped AEC Routemaster open-topper RM450 (WLT 450) is now in a special all-over red livery for Medway FM Radio. It is reported that the London sightseeing operations are soon to pass to Arriva.

London General GA

MCW Metroriders MRL181-4 (H681-4 YGO) have been withdrawn and sold to Epsom Buses; underlining the chronic shortage of drivers in the south-east, services C3, S1 and 413 have been surrendered due to staff shortages and have been reallocated by London Transport to Epsom Buses (S1, 413) and Limebourne (C3) respectively.

The unique AEC Routemaster RML fitted with rear doors, DRM2516 (WLT 516, JJD 516D) is now reallocated to Merton garage.

Other disposals are of Mercedes-Benz 811Ds MA126/34 (H426/34 XGK) and 709D MT3 (F393 DHL) to unconfirmed buyers.

London Pride Sightseeing

MCW Metroliner DR130/CH57/16F B223 VHW is in stock ex-Essbee of Coatbridge.

MCW Metrobuses 113 (JWF 490W) is now converted to part open-top and is renumbered 266 accordingly, but ex-London General 205/19 (BYX 255/19V) are similarly converted without fleetnumber change.

London Transport

A dozen or so of the remaining reserve fleet AEC Routemasters are thought to be destined for Turkey, via PVS, Carlton (dealer).

London United/Westlink

New are Volvo Olympian/Alexander (Belfast) H47/25D VA11-7 (XDZ 5911-7), followed by VA18-26 (R918-26 WOE); why these have Birmingham registrations is unclear!

Maidstone & District AA

Dennis Dart 9SDL3034/Northern Counties B35F 137-40 (L137-40 YVK) are on loan from Kentish Bus to cover for an extended recall programme on Volvo B6s here.

Ripley of Carlton (dealer) has taken Leyland Atlanteans 5729/38/43 (SRJ 751R, KJP 280/75W) and Bristol VRT/SL3 5838 (BKE 838T).

New Enterprise 7012/5 (YSU 872, J26 UNY) have gone on loan to Midland Fox for three months from mid-September. Leyland Leopard 7033 (GGM 69W) has been withdrawn for disposal.

Mainline

Vehicles taken in stock from Aston Express of Killamarsh are:

Dennis Dominator DD137B/Alexander H45/34F 3001 (FGE 441X)
Dodge S56/Alexander B25F 3002 (D317 SDS) and B23F 3003 (D681 SEM)
Mercedes-Benz 608D/Dormobile B20F 3004-6 (D526/38/43 RCK)
MCW Metrorider MF151/3/B23F 3007 (D623 MDB)
MCW Metrorider MF150/113/B25F 3008 (F682 YOG)
MCW Metrorider MF150/27/B23F 3009/10 (E835/8 BTN)
MCW Metrorider MF150/96/B25F 3011-3 (F895/6 80YR)
MCW Metrorider MF151/3/B23F 3014/5 (D659/68 NNE)

Further Alexander-bodied Volvo B10M-55s refurbished for Silver Service are 627-30 in the same fashion as 626.

Dennis Dominator/Alexander 2303 (A303 XAK) sustained roof damage which has been repaired by parts from 2110 (KKU 110W), now reduced to open-top. It is notable that double-deckers no longer operate on service 130 following this incident.

MCW Metrobuses 1927/31 (B927/31 CDT) have been withdrawn to reserve, along with Dominators 2134/8 (MWB 854W, OWE 138X). Other withdrawn and stored stock comprises Dodge minis 199, 203/6, MCW Metrobuses 1858 (and cannibalised sister 1926) and Dennis Dominators 2108/13/6/8/9/6/8/43, 2223/33. Dominators 2104/6/23/39/97 have been sold to Alisons Coaches of Dunfermline; also sold are Dodges 194/4/9, 201/3/5/6/10/7/26/38/51, 3002/3, Dominators 2101/11/7/21/8/35/50/2/6, 2204/5, 3001 and Mercedes-Benz minis 3004-6. Sadly, Dennis Dominos 45, 48-50 (B45 FET, C48-50 HDT) have all gone for scrap to PVS, Carlton (dealer); 45 carried the first Optare body — but has now been reduced to bought by the scrapman along with its sisters. 53 (C53 HDT) was recorded with Wealden PSV, Five Oak Green (dealer) earlier this summer. Dominators 2121/8/34/56 and 2204/5 are earmarked for allocation to Northern Bus stock. Additionally, 3007/9/10 have gone on loan to Headlight at Barnsley, whilst 3014/5 to Yorkshire Travel at Dewsbury. 101 has returned off-loan, back to Volvo.

Reader Mark Penney kindly writes to update notes on the Leyland Titan Towcar fleet. 9001 (DUG 167C, ex-M1) is now based at Olive Grove garage; 9004 (OWJ 354A, ex-M4) is at Rotherham, 9010 (OWJ 357A, ex-M10) is at Halfway, 9016 (OWJ 782A, ex-M16) is at Doncaster and 9052 (OWJ 388A, ex-M52) is at Green Lane Road. 9003 (OWJ 353A, ex-M3) has been sold into preservation and is under restoration (by owners Don and Mark Penney, based at the St Helens Transport Museum); 9018 (BWW 654B, ex-M18) is now in preservation near Doncaster in the ownership of Dave Lovegrove; 9053 (OWJ 356A, ex-M53) has passed to an unknown buyer. Driver trainer M12 (388 KDT) is on loan to the 188/220 Group, based at Sandtoft Transport Centre, M20 (OWJ 363A, 477 HDT) is now in the United States. Former Sheffield Titan PD3/1 904 (3904 WE) is now renumbered 9904 and restored to Sheffield livery, in use as a driver trainer based at Rotherham.

Other disposals are of Mercedes-Benz 811Ds MA126/34 (H426/34 XGK) and 709D MT3 (F393 DHL) to unconfirmed buyers.

London Pride Sightseeing

MCW Metroliner DR130/CH57/16F B223 VHW is in stock ex-Essbee of Coatbridge.

MCW Metrobuses 113 (JWF 490W) is now converted to part open-top and is renumbered 266 accordingly, but ex-London General 205/19 (BYX 255/19V) are similarly converted without fleetnumber change.

London Transport

A dozen or so of the remaining reserve fleet AEC Routemasters are thought to be destined for Turkey, via PVS, Carlton (dealer).

London United/Westlink

New are Volvo Olympian/Alexander (Belfast) H47/25D VA11-7 (XDZ 5911-7), followed by VA18-26 (R918-26 WOE); why these have Birmingham registrations is unclear!

Maidstone & District AA

Dennis Dart 9SDL3034/Northern Counties B35F 137-40 (L137-40 YVK) are on loan from Kentish Bus to cover for an extended recall programme on Volvo B6s here.

Ripley of Carlton (dealer) has taken Leyland Atlanteans 5729/38/43 (SRJ 751R, KJP 280/75W) and Bristol VRT/SL3 5838 (BKE 838T).

New Enterprise 7012/5 (YSU 872, J26 UNY) have gone on loan to Midland Fox for three months from mid-September. Leyland Leopard 7033 (GGM 69W) has been withdrawn for disposal.

Markley, Silloth

Iveco 49.10/Robin Hood B21F C505 DYM is now in stock from Irving of Dalston.

Merseypride, Bootle

Livery variations are now appearing; Leyland Atlantean SND 449X is mostly cream with black window surrounds and green skirt, SND 454X is in green with cream window surrounds.

CVE Omnis E601/3 EDC have been disposed of, as has Leyland Atlantean MVK 540R, to Mitchell of Plean (but now with Christie of Alloa) and HSJ 61V to Castle Buses of Speke.

Metcalfe, Cumdivock

VW LT55/Optare CityPacer B25F E908 XUA (VIA 485, E857 GRN) is now in stock from Stewart of Rockcliffe, Leyland Leopard PSUSC/4R/Duple C53F DAK 220V coming from Appleby of Conisholm.

Metrobus, Orpington

Volvo Olympian/East Lancs Pyoneer H47/25D R830-9/41-3 MFR are now in stock — there is to be no R840 MFR. New Dennis Dart R58 GNW is not a low-floor SLF model, as previously reported, but a standard 9.8SDL version.

Further Darts added to stock are 9.8SDL/Plaxton Pointer B40F K831/2 SFT, N259-61 PJR from Catch-a-Bus of East Boldon, whilst another MCW Metrobus added to stock is DR101/9/MCW H43/28D WYV 76T, joining M228/35/59, 320 and 447 at Lewes on transfer from Orpington.

MAN/Optare Vecta P912 XUG has been returned off-loan as have borrowed Leyland Titans WYV 3T, NUW 647/51/66/71Y and A840 SUL, to Seikent off-loan here.

The three open-toppers, Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1s ADV 299A and 928 GTA, along with Leyland Titan PD3/4 AOR 157B have all passed to Ensign, Purfleet (dealer).

Metroline

First of 32 new 10.2m Dennis Dart SLFs with Plaxton Pointer B30D bodywork for services 189 and 316 are DLD22-79 (R122 RLY etc). DLD24/5 were initially put to work as type trainers, the rest stored on delivery at Cricklewood.

Midland Red South ST

Another new Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliner is 38 (R38 AKV).

MTL MT

New orders call for 22 new double-deckers (of, so far, unconfirmed chassis/body), along with 25 Dennis Dart SLFs to be shared between Liverbus (14), Speke (10) and Birkenhead (one).

Volvo B6LE/Alexander ALX200 7101 (P678 NOJ) is on long-term loan to Speke.

MTL London MT

MCW Metrobuses M148 (BYX 148V) is suffering from corrosion problems and so is now out of service and under cannibalisation at Potters Bar. Former reserve fleet AEC Routemasters RM1081, 2097 (81 CLT, ALM 97B) have similarly now been stripped to bare shells.



Group codes

AA	Arriva
	Passenger Services
BL	Blazefield Holdings
EY	EYMS Group
FB	FirstBus
GA	Go-Ahead Group
MT	MTL Holdings
NX	National Express
ST	Stagecoach Holdings
TR	Transit Holdings
YT	Yorkshire Traction

An unusual vehicle is Scania L113CRL/East Lancs, R672 NFR, of Lakeland, Hurst Green which has acquired it to operate further Lancashire County Council contracts out of Clitheroe.

R. MARSHALL

Newport Transport

Optare Excel L1150/B42F demonstrator P447 SWX has been on trial here during September. DP MCW Metroriders 37/8 (E378 UBO) have been sold to Boyd & Chick of Newport, thus joining seven other ex-Newport shedmates there — Leyland Tiger coaches IAZ 3503/4 (STG 2Y, B603 DDW) and C73 KLG (XFM 203, C73 KLG) along with Metroriders D477/8 PON. Interestingly, prior to disposal, 38 was used to transport aid supplies on behalf of a charity to Belarus.

Nip-on, St Helens

Leyland Tiger/Duple PSU 775 is now in stock from Ribble.

Northern Bus, North Anston

Ex-Mainline/Aston Express/Ribble Mercedes-Benz L608D/Dormobile B20F D526/38/43 RCK have been noted in livery with new-style 'Northern' fleetnames. Leyland Tiger/ECW 1205 (TPC 105X) is now back in service, but is now numbered 2205.

Northumbria AA

Further new Optare MetroRiders delivered are MR15/B31F 905/7-14 (P905/7-10, 251, 912-4 JNL) which are identical to 902-4/6 (P902/4/6 DRG) received earlier.

Acquisitions are of Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple C53F 219 (TSU 636, A183 MKE) from Maidstone & District, together with Crosville Cymru's DAF SB220LC/Optare Delta DP48F, F701/2 ECC, for which new fleetnumbers are awaited.

Vehicles in Hunters livery have been renumbered: 52-4 (E820-2 BTN) to 820-2; 56-60 (P56-59, 61 XTN) to 897-901; 82-88 (BPT 923/17S, HUP 759T, DUP 745S, PAJ 827X, CPT 738S, SGR 777V) to 530/26/49/43/90/40/58 respectively.

Driver trainers 9987/9 (LGR 654P, MGR 659P) have been retired and passed to North East Bus Breakers, Annfield Pain (dealer).

Nostalgibus, London N1

Leyland Fleetlines OJD 397R and THX 489S have been withdrawn and sold to Blue Triangle (dealer), only for the latter to be destroyed shortly afterwards in the filming of a fire in a bus garage for the TV series *London's Burning*, along with DMS1657, 1845, 2639. DMS1867/74, 2503/90 also featured, but were not destroyed.

AEC Routemaster RM1571 (571 CLT), which inaugurated the Southend operation of the type, and RM1394 (394 CLT), have both been appearing on Sundays-only services 676/678 recently.

Nottingham City Transport

Further B31F Optare MetroRiders are 228/30/2 (R228 SCH etc). Similar 222 is registered N272 BAL and not as previously reported.

OK Travel, Bishop Auckland GA

Recent transfers into OK stock are MCW Metrobuses 3511/5 (WYV 55T, BYX 217V) from Gateshead & District.

Transfers away of OK stock see DAF SB220s 4801/3-5 (J201/3-5 VHN) and Leyland Tiger A716 ABB (awaiting confirmation) are now with Sunderland & District, whilst Volvo B6s 8401/2 (L401/2 FVN) move to Gateshead & District and Leyland Atlantean 3471 (AUP 371V) is now with Tyneside. Leyland Leopard 9279 (GMS 279S) is now reinstated and is working from Philadelphia depot.

Another vehicle to lose OK livery in favour of the Go-Ahead corporate blue and red is 8418 (M418 PVN). DAF MB230/Duple 5142 (574 CPT) is now re-registered back to its original G704 AEF prior to withdrawal (see below), sister 5141 (CU 6860, G703 AEF) being re-registered to UGD 735.

The Go-Ahead Group ownership is making its presence felt, with continued very heavy withdrawals of former OK stock as well as garage closures. OK stock thus withdrawn comprises MCW-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 9185, 9200/28 (VFT 185, 200T, YNL 228V); ECW-bodied Atlanteans 9267, 9387, 9418/24/36/48/50/2/5 (SUP 267V, SFV 425P, RFR 418/24P, MBR 436/48/50/2/5T); Roe-bodied Atlanteans 9350/9/60 (AUP 350W etc); Alexander-bodied Atlanteans 9073, 9138/49, 9682, 9709/14/21/9/30 (HVN 73V, CWG 724V; OVK 138/49M, CWG 682, 709/14/21/9/30V), the last examples being the last of 13 acquired from South Yorkshire back in 1991; Optare-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D 2601 (F601 TAJ); Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 2703 (G703 NGR); East Lancs-bodied Leopards 9083/7-9 (LBO 83X, PWO 87-9Y); Alexander-bodied Leopards 9931/2/5 (MCL 931/2/5P), last of seven long-lasting vehicles acquired back in 1984 from Eastern Counties; Duple-bodied DAF MB230s 5129/39/41/2 (EIB 1647, D901 EAJ, LSK 607, G701 AEF; UGD 735, CU 6860, G703 AEF; G704 AEF, 574 CPT, G704 AEF); Plaxton-bodied Dennis Javelin 9327 (JSK 327, E151 AGG); Duple-bodied Javelin 9328 (JSK 328, E980 KJF); Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M 9340 (340 GUP, E102 DJR); Plaxton 1987-rebodied Leyland Tiger 9737 (JIJ 3737, LFT 6X).

North East Bus Breakers (dealer) has taken Leopards 9621, 9933/4 (OSJ 621R, MCL 933/4P), Atlanteans 9350/60, 9455 (AUP 350/60W, MBR 455T), AUP 350W happily re-appearing later with Weardale Motor Services of Stanhope. Leopard 9964 (SPT 964V) is now with Garnett of Tindale Crescent near Bishop Auckland whilst 9130 (WCK 130V, 9621 (OSJ 621R) and 9933/4 (MCL 933/4P) are all now with Lough Swilly of Northern Ireland.

The former OK garages at Team Valley and Peterlee have both been closed down. Team Valley vehicles have gone to Gateshead & District, where they operate as a separate unit on their former routes, the TV garage being retained to store withdrawn vehicles from all group companies. In September, the sizeable stored contingent comprised 290, 2601, 2703, 4796/8-800, 9039/50/3/62/8/9/7/3/61-3/7-9, 9103/38/49/85/90, 9200/28/67/73/9, 9306/27/8/40/59/77/87, 9418/36/47/8/50/2, 9602, 9704/9/14-6/21/8-30/5/7, 9901/30-2/5 and T516. Peterlee vehicles transferred to Sunderland District's Philadelphia garage.

A further OK tradition ended on 20 September, when the very last conductors and conductresses worked their final shifts on the famous service 724 (Bishop Auckland-Newcastle). Significantly, they were the last conductor/esses in the whole north east of England.

Oxford Bus Company GA

The Oxford Citylink service to London is being upgraded with 12 new coaches and four used ones. Into service on 8 November were 1-4 (R1-4 OXF), Volvo B10Ms with Plaxton Première C53F bodywork, and these are to be followed by 5-12 (R5-12 OXF), more B10Ms but with Plaxton Excalibur C53F bodywork in late-February. They are to be fitted with air conditioning by next Spring. The used coaches are M627-30 FNS, also Volvo B10Ms with Jonckheere Deauville C49Ft bodywork, which were new to Park, Hamilton, though have been on short-term lease to Clarkes, London, over the summer.

Former London General Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10Bs 644-56 (K100, 2-6, 70, 8-13 KLL) are now all re-registered en-bloc to K118-30 BUD, the KLL marks returning to London General.

Wear Buses MCW Metrorider 755 (E755 VJO) has been on loan to cover for the troubled battery-powered Optare MetroRider MRELs 801-4 (L801-4 HJO), now revitalised with new electrical equipment from the USA.

Leyland Olympian 217 (BBW 217Y) is now in Park & Ride livery.

PMT FB

New are Mercedes-Benz Vario/Plaxton Beaver 2 MMM250/6 (R250/6 ERE).

Pete's Travel, West Bromwich

New is Mercedes-Benz Vario 0.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 R937 AMB.

Preston Bus

Three of the latest batch of six long-wheelbase Optare MetroRider/B29F are now at work as 32-34 (R432-4 RFR), with 35-37 due by March. These feature the restyled front, Euro 2 engine specification and lower entrance steps to meet the latest 1997 DiPTAC specification. Services 14 and 32 (Preston-Tanerton) are now minibus worked as is new service 36 (Preston-Cottam).

Leyland Atlanteans 175/6/82 (DRN 175Y etc) have been in occasional use as driver trainers recently, whilst repaints have continued to appear with neat black lining (to separate blue from cream) as well as larger black fleetnumbers, Leyland Tiger 137 being a recent example. Atlantean 171 (URN 171Y) now has a CCTV video surveillance system fitted to combat recent increases in vandalism from stone-throwers in the Preston area under an initiative from Lancashire County Council.

Unexpectedly, six Atlanteans have been withdrawn rather than just three, comprising 152-5/7/8 (GFV 152-7/8, OBV 158Y), the first W and X-registered examples to go. Dodge minis 52 and 58 (D752/8 YCW) have both been scrapped by the company after sustaining accident damage that was uneconomic to repair, the first such losses since the days of the Leyland Panthers. The first single-deck overall advertisement for 13 years (also, since the Panthers) is Leyland Lynx 229 (H29 YBV), for Kingston Fitted Bedrooms, featuring a newly-rebuilt front end with plastic grilles following accident damage.

Leyland/Preston CT Titan PD3/6 rebuild 2 (PRN 761) won smartest vintage vehicle at the Southport-Blackpool run this summer shortly after restoration by the company's workshops. Olympian 106 also won smartest modern vehicle, a hat-trick of achievement for this smart fleet being the smartest recovery vehicle, won by Seddon-Atkinson Strato 400 K288 HNG as well!

Provincial FB

New Dennis Dart SLFs 608-23 have registrations reserved as R608-23 YCR.

Bristol VRT/SL3 low-bridge accident-victim 504 (RHT 504S) is now being rebuilt to a convertible open-topper to CO43/27D layout using parts from acquired VR NUM 340V (bought as an engineless and windowless hulk).

The first two Leyland National 2s to arrive from Bristol are NL116L11/1R/B52F 421/2 (AAE 645/52V), to be overhauled and repainted at Hoeford works prior to use. These are the first two of six due here, in exchange for Ivecos 141-6 (J141-6 KPX).

Daimler Fleetline convertible open-topper 133 (NFX 133P) is now returned, off loan, to Vintage Yellow Buses, whilst borrowed Bristol VR 5531 (EWS 739W) has gone direct to Western National without returning home to Bristol.

R&M Travel, Darwen

Freight Rover Sherpa C664 BEX and Iveco 49.10 D772 MUR are in use on new service R1 (Darwen-Pothouse).



New operator, Merseyplus, is using this ex-AA Motor Services Leyland National Mk 1 on route X62 between Runcorn and Liverpool. R. L. WILSON

Reading Buses

Optare Excel demonstrator N330 EUG has been on loan and in use on the Park & Ride service.

Ribble ST

New are Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F 668-72 (R668-72 LFR).

Leyland Leopard PSU3C/3R/Alexander (Belfast) GSU 863T is now numbered T253 for use as a driver trainer.

Inter-company transfers see 2244/5 (P274/5 VPN) move to Burnley & Pendle stock and 114/5 (H114/5 ABV) taken into stock here from B&P.

Now sold are Leyland Nationals 311/75, 806/12 (AHH 206/9T, TRN 806/12V) to Dart Buses of Paisley,

Leyland Atlantean 1212 (TCK 212X) passing to Duff of Sutton-in-the-Forest, 1221 (BFV 221Y) to APT,

Rayleigh and 1476 (TRN 476V) to Kingsley of Birtley.

A farewell tour to the Leyland Atlantean was operated by one of the only two native Ribble Atlanteans left in traffic — 1980 AN68A/1R/ECW H43/31F 1481 (TRN 481V) — on 24 August, organised by Chorley's Operations Manager and correspondent John Young. 515 Atlanteans have been operated by Ribble (including Standerwick and Scout) and the now just 23 remain in stock, comprising 1206/10/1 at Blackburn, 1235/7-9 at Bolton, 1236/96 at Burnley, 1202/13/5 and 1481 at Chorley, 1201/5/14 at Preston along with 1209/94/7/9, 1478/80 stored withdrawn and awaiting sale.

Readers who are keen to follow Ribble (past and present) as well as the host of operators in the surrounding north west area are recommended to the fully-detailed monthly *News Bulletin* published by the well-established Ribble Enthusiasts Club, which has as its Vice Presidents no less than both the Chairman and Managing Director of Stagecoach Ribble. PSV Circle style is followed in the *News Bulletin* and much greater detail is given than can be included in these pages (eg allocations, chassis/body numbers, subsequent disposals etc). We are indebted to the Club for kindly making this publication available to 'Fleet News'. For details, please send an SAE to the Secretary, C. McKernan, 36 Wales Road, Waterfoot, Rossendale BB4 9SU.

Rider York FB

New Scania saloons 8434/7 are correctly registered R434/7 GSF.

Greater Glasgow Scania L113CRLAA/Wright B40F SS13 (P113 YSH) has been on loan although not used in traffic.

Bristol VRT/SL3s 713/7 (DWU 296T, EWR 165T) and Leyland Leopards 1594/7 (ARB 868/9S) have been reinstated, but all bar 1597 were quickly withdrawn again within a month, the VRs going to Appleby of Conisholme and 1594 to Brewers stock.

Readers interested in West Yorkshire operators, such as Harrogate & District, Keighley & District, Rider York etc — and of course in the former West Yorkshire Road Car Co — are recommended to the regular and fully-detailed monthly news-sheets of the West Yorkshire Information Service, kindly made available to 'Fleet News' each month and from which the above notes are drawn, amongst others this issue. For further details, please send an SAE to the Hon Secretary, West Yorkshire Information Service, J. F. Gill, 8 Ash Bank Road, Ripon HG4 2EQ. The WYIS has kindly supported *Buses* and its predecessor, *Buses Illustrated* for many years, for which we are indebted.

Road Car YT

New deliveries are of Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte B39F 501-4 (R501-4 JFE), whilst acquisitions continue, with the receipt of Renault S75/Reeve Burgess Beaver B31F 367 (G873 WML) from Yorkshire Traction and Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/DP48F 291 (NWY 433V) and NL106L11/1R/B43F 298 (FAO 927V) both from Catch-a-Bus, Hylton Castle. Also received on transfer are Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/ECW H43/31F 1385/9 (TRN 485/69V) from Lincoln City stock.

Now withdrawn are Dodge S56 55 (D105 OWG) and Leyland National 2812 (NWT 712M), whilst Leyland Atlanteans 1341/6 (ANA 601, 546Y) are now transferred to Lincoln City stock.

Rossendale Transport

From Stagecoach Manchester come Leyland Atlantean AN68D/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F A741/52 NNA whilst ex-Wessex Volvo B10M-60/Plaxton C51F H462 BEU is currently on loan from Kirkby of Anston (dealer).

To make way for an acquired Dennis Dart, Leyland Atlantean 19 (STE 19S) is now renumbered to 49. Also renumbered is Volvo B10M-50/East Lancs DP 393 (B183 FDM) to 33.

Former Metroline Carlyle Dartline B28F-bodied Dart 8.5SDL3003s continue to flood into stock; now numbered are 19, 20 (H119/20 MOB) and 81-91 (H102/4/9/10/2/4/27-31 MOB). H620 MOM is also in stock, but has gone on loan to Border of Burnley. All these are to receive Handyrider livery before use.

Withdrawn as a result are 6, 39, 43-45, 52/4-6/8 and 66, 68 (E519 UWF, F103 YWO, E143/4 KYW, D601 AFR, E481 CNM, E979/80 DGS, E56, 58 KHG, E977 DGS, F168 DET).

Selkent ST

New Dennis Dart SLF SLD20-29 (R120-9 VPU) are now reported as B33F capacity.

Transferred from East London to assist with the change to this company's operation of service 162 from Kentish Bus are Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR/Leyland T439/98, 501/4/58/60, 647/71 (KYV 439/98, 501/4X, NUW 558/60, 647/71Y) along with further Dart 9SDL3024/Plaxton Pointer B34F DRL112/20 (K112/20 SRH).

Darts DT28, 30 and 35 (49 CLT, G30, 35 TGW) are now withdrawn and sold to Stagecoach Devon.

Shamrock, Pontypridd

Rebodied Mercedes-Benz C331 MLG is now in service, but the second rebodied, C327 UFP (not C328 UFP as initially expected) remains unlicensed and unregistered at Abercynon.

Acquisitions are Leyland Atlantean PDR1A/1/Alexander H43/31F TDW 212J, AN68/1R/Alexander H45/36F NRG 164/9M, AN68A/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F VBA 176S and AN68A/2R/East Lancs H50/36F from now-defunct Phillips of Penrhinebeir for continued use on former Phillips school contracts. From Coombs of Weston come Bristol VRT/SL3/501/ECW H43/31F GRF 702V, VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/27D AHU 519V and VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW DPH41/25F CJH 125V, whilst Leyland National 10351B/1R/B41F BPL 498T is also in stock but of unconfirmed source.

Leyland Nationals KSO 64P and VKU 75S have been withdrawn, as has Dormobile-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D K365 TGF, now reduced to just a chassis with front/rear ends of its bodywork remaining.



The Shires AA

Deliveries are of further Scania L113CRL/Northern Counties B49F 3196-9, 3201/2 (R196 RBM etc), branded for services 100/101 (Luton-Hitchin-Stevenage).

Leyland Nationals 3020/5 (BVV 547T, EPD 523V) have been withdrawn and are under cannibalisation at Stevenage, Bristol VRT/SL2 5005 (RRP 815M) similarly at Dunstable. VRT/SL3s 5020/7 (OVV 855R, CBD 900T) are withdrawn and intact at Dunstable also.

Silcox, Pembroke Dock

Further arrivals are Leyland Titan GNF 13V and Leyland Tiger/Plaxton Derwent II E628 WWD from unconfirmed sources.

Smiths, Shennington NX

New are Volvo B10L/Wright B43F R474-7 XDA, mixed with the latest Travel West Midlands batch and allocated to TWM fleetnumbers 1474-7 on paper.

Inter-company transfers see the arrival of Leyland Nationals AOL 13T and TVP 850S from TWM.

Solent Blue Line

Some Bristol VRTs have been superseded by 14 44-seater UVG Unistar-bodied Dennis SLFs now in operation on services 18/19 (Thornhill-Millbrook), owned and operated by Marchwood Motorways of Totton under franchise to Solent Blue Line. They are R551-4/6-65 UOT.

A new livery is now being applied, happily moving away from diagonal stripes. Early recipients are Leyland Olympians 721/2/9/31/5/6 and Bristol VRT/SL3s 166/9. Olympians 706-9/31/3/4 are due to follow suit.

The large number of Bristol VRT/SL3s ousted by the midibus are 84, 96-98 and 101-9 (NDL 654R, BFX 576/7T, PTT 98R, ODL 661-9S), leaving 123/49-52/4-65/7/8 (DBV 23W, LHG 449-52/4-9T, TRN 460-5V, FDL 678/80V) in stock. Iveco 49.10.288 (F258 CEY) has been sold to Brian Tours, Bishop's Waltham for its Hedge End Hoppa service 25, another Solent Blue Line franchise operation.

Southampton Citybus FB

295 (P295 KPX) is the first of the Volvo Olympians to be painted in standard red fleet livery — having operated for over a year in all-over white 'dealer stock' paintwork; its five sisters are still white.

Southend Transport AA

An interesting arrival at London Road garage in November was Leaside Buses' coach AEC Routemaster/Park Royal H32/25RD RMC1453 (453 CLT). It was used in daily service from 22 November until Christmas.

Livery experimentation continues here. Initially, Leyland Olympian 282 (MUH 285X) appeared in a copy of the Dennis Dart-style livery, with blue roof/upper deck windows, blue skirt capped with broad red band. This was very quickly changed, with upswept red band, accompanied by an upswept blue band (as shown in *Buses September*). Shortly after, this was changed a third time to have the blue skirt extended to the full area below the lower deck windows, with twin red stripes upswept from the rear wheelchair skirt up to the bottom of the upper deck windows.

Healthy loadings have prompted the need for an additional two single-deckers, causing formerly withdrawn Colchester/ex-Midland Red South Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B49F BVP 812V and EON 825V to be taken into stock for the foreseeable future this time. Both have been smartly outshopped in the livery style applied to the Dennis Lances (blue roof, white below with blue skirt, above which is a narrow red trimstripe separated from the blue) — and very nice they look, too. Fleetnumbers are to remain 12 and 25. Further, the only remaining example of ST's own Leyland National fleet, DAF re-engined/rebuilt 745 (PJ1 3745, GGE 1707) is now to be retained and is also to receive the same livery.

News of former stock is that AEC Routemasters 111/2/7 (ALM 101B, CUV 124C, 682 DYE) all passed via Brakell (dealer) to McDonalds — 111 being in use in Germany and 117 in Holland, but 112 is untraced. Sadly, the Beach Bus, Kitty Hawk operation in North Carolina on which 104/8 (VY 542, 61 CLT) have been used in open-top form, has now ceased and so their whereabouts are not confirmed. The unique open-platform RCL2256, latterly Southend 121 (CUV 256C) remains in now-dowdy Yorkshire Belles maroon/gold livery and made a very welcome reappearance in Southend at the recent Castlepoint Open Day. It is due to be outshopped in London red shortly, which will enable it to perform the role of a pseudo-RML for film, TV and other charter work.

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MT	MTL Holdings
NX	National Express
ST	Stagecoach Holdings
TR	Transit Holdings
YT	Yorkshire Traction

Seen at Wigan Bus Station is Greater Manchester Plaxton bodied Dennis Dart SLF, 6027 (R227 SBA).
JOHN ALDRIDGE

Southern Vectis

Acquisitions for the coach fleet are Volvo B10M/Plaxton Excalibur C49Ft 903/4 (N667/8 VJB), now re-registered WDL 142, 748 respectively. Setra 902 (J902 LDL, WDL 748) has been withdrawn and sold to Hodson's Coaches, Lincolnshire. Happily, 1939 Bristol K50 502 (CDL 889) is now again in mechanical health after remedial work following failure on the A3 during the rally season — it appeared as a static exhibit at the Isle of Wight College to aid the Macmillan Appeal event on 3 October.

South London AA

The fleet of 24 Kentish Bus-liveried Iveco-engined AEC Routemasters was due to have been transferred to South London ownership and operation by the end of October, maintenance transferring to Brixton. Acquisitions are MCW Metrobus DR101/12/MCW H43/28D M474 (GYE 474W) and Dennis Dart 9SDL/Plaxton Pointer DRL47/8 from County Bus.

Stagecoach Darlington ST

New are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Première C51F 82-85 (R82-85 SEF) for service X90 (Richmond/Darlington-Newcastle), fitted with Hannover electronic indicator displays.

Consequent upon the new Volvos, Alexander-bodied B10M DPs 551-3 (N551-3 VDC) are now cascaded onto normal service work from the X90 — and have replaced Renault minibuses!

A batch of 10 Leyland Fleetlines is now due here over a period from Transit stock, to enable less-familiar former Hull MCW Metrobuses 102/4-6 (LAT 512/4/05/6V) to be sold. Six Volvo B6 midis are also expected on transfer from Transit. Meanwhile, the first ex-Busways Leyland Atlantean to receive corporate colours are 122/4/8 (AVK 142V, SCN 249S, AVK 148V), in order.

Renault S75s withdrawn are 363-6/8/70-2 (H401 DMJ, J553 NGS, J225/6/8/30-2 JJR); 363/71/2 were only temporarily laid to rest, being reinstated at Hartlepool, 364 here at Darlington (with 368/70 retained as reserve stock here) whilst 365/6 have gone to storage at Stockton.

Stagecoach Manchester ST

Further new saloons are flooding into stock here, latest being Volvo B10M-55/Alexander PS B49F 904-10/2-47 (R904 XVM etc), all based at Hyde Road apart from 937-47 at Princess Road.

New Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10BLE 605 (P605 JBU) entered service on 1 October at Hyde Road, having been away on demonstration work in Sweden.

The mass withdrawal of the faithful Leyland Atlantean continues unabated with the latest casualties being 4381/93 (ORJ 381/93W), 4487/95 (SND 487/95X), 4513/33/82/9/93/6/7 (SND 513X, ANA 533/82/9/93/6/7Y), 4613/20/4/7/30/44/6/7/61/74/87/96 (ANA 613/20/4/7/30/44/6/7Y, A661/74/87/96 HNB), 4700/2/6/11/41/52 (A700 HNB, A702/6/11 LNC, A741/52 NNA) and MCW Metrobuses 5036/71 and 5123 (MRJ 36, 71W, SND 123X). Only 32 Atlanteans remained in service by mid-September, comprising 4506/18 and 4608 at Princess Road, 4730/45 at Stockport and 4715/9/35/44/50/4 at Hyde Road in GMS livery and all due for withdrawal by the end of 1997; the balance is of Magic Bus-liveried 4639/57/60/8/71/8/9/83/90/3, 4705/25/6/43/7/9/51/7/61/2/4 also at Princess Road.

Stagecoach South Group ST

The first new low-floor vehicles for the Group are Sussex Coastline Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 B37F 1-11 (R701-11 DNJ), which feature Hanover electronic indicator displays. East London Dart/Alexander SLD18 (R118 VPU) was on loan to Coastline at Worthing prior to the delivery of 1-4 to route-test the type.

Mercedes-Benz 811D/Plaxton Beaver DP29F 2220 (M220 DWV) is an acquisition from Richardson Travel (Va Midhurst & District), which has relinquished local Midhurst service 99 to Sussex Coastline.

Acquired ex-East London Leyland Titans 7209/72 (OHV 769Y, NUW 672Y) remain with East Kent from delivery, but 7214/21/31 (OHV 784/61/31Y) are now with Sussex Coastline for Portsmouth operations. 7235/63 are registered NUW 645/63Y and not as given last month. Titans 7208/24/35/70 (OHV 688, 724Y, NUW 645/70Y) are still on loan to Cambus, remaining in London red and converted to single-door prior to leaving East London.

South Coast Buses Volvo 7302 (F302 MYJ) now has a Bright-Tech front indicator display fitted to replace its Vultron unit, which only 7303/5 now retain. South Coast Buses convertible open-top Bristol VRT/SL3 7621 (UWV 621S) has been re-roofed for the winter, but conversion of 9251 (JWV 251W) to a permanent tree-lopper is now completed and it was awaiting licensing at Eastbourne recently.

Ailing Bristol VRT/SL open-topper 0770 (HKE 690L) again failed at the end of the season, causing the Hastings Tour to call upon a replacement; still covering for 0770 some eight days later, convertible VRT/SL3 7623 (UWV 623S) also failed, thus the Tour was then left in the hands of Darts — at reduced fares! Meanwhile, by contrast, trusty 33-year old Leyland Titan PD3/4 0409 (409 DCD) has not only put in at least one full day on the arduous Beachy Head service without any difficulties, but also took part in the Hastings Old Town Carnival. 0424 (424 DCD) was used for a sponsored bus pull by Portsmouth staff between Hilsea Lido and South Parade Pier in aid of The Rowans Hospice at Purbrook.

Bristol VRT/SL3 7367 (JWV 267W) has now been withdrawn for disposal and previously-withdrawn 7366 (JWV 266W) has been sold to John Pike Coaches of Andover.

Readers keen to follow developments for the major and minor operators in the former Southdown area in particular are recommended to the fully-detailed Southdown Enthusiasts Club's monthly *Journal*, which is kindly made available to 'Fleet News' each month. This gives news in much greater detail than can be given in these pages (in PSV Circle-style layout). For details, please send an SAE to the Secretary, Southdown Enthusiasts Club, Noral Simes, 11 High Cross Fields, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2SN.

Stuarts, Dukinfield

Coaches DAF/Caetano 36 (SXI 3627) and DAF/LAG 40 (MIW 4840) remain in use, based in Hyde.

Bus stock traced are DAF SB220s 123/4 (K123/4 TCP) now with K-Line of Leeds, 124 subsequently moving to South London, Dennis Darts 132-4 (N132-4 XND) materialising with MK Metro and Leyland Atlantean 127 (JKW 322W) with Maun of Mansfield.

Swindon & District ST

Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 712/4/6 (M712/4 FMR, N716 KAM) are now back from loan to Cheltenham District, but Leyland National 2 302 (LFR 861X) has been withdrawn and has made a permanent move there! Previously-withdrawn Ford Transit 190D 641 (C641 SFH) has now passed to T. J. Walsh of Halifax.

All over blue school-bus liveried Bristol VRT/SL3s are quite frequently to be seen operating normal passenger service journeys on the 77 (Cirencester-Swindon).

Tees & District AA

Inter-company transfers see the arrival of Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F 756 (DUP 756S), 804/22 (XPT 804V, MEF 822W) and Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C53F 1422 (CVN 174Y) from United stock.

Acquisitions meanwhile are of Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple C50F 1431-3 (YKL 281, A176 MKE; 445 YMU, A177 MKE; 681 CXM, A178 MK) and similar, but C53F 1434 (648 WHX, A185 MKE) from Maidstone & District; Gardner 6LXB re-engined Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/DP48F 3758 (CCY 819Y) from West Riding and similarly re-powered NL116AL11/1R/B49F 3759/60 (HED 204/5V) from Yorkshire Buses.

Now withdrawn are VR 866 (DWY 138T) and Tiger buses 1227-31/3 (TDC 857X, B957-9 LHN, C74, 76 UHN) and Leyland National 2 3738 (RDC 738X). 866 has been sold.

Teesside Motor Services AA

Inward transfers from United stock are of DAF-engined Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F 3104/6 (LUP 904T, PUP 506T, RUP 307V) and 3718/23 (WPT 718/23R).

Now withdrawn are Leyland Nationals 3604/8/51/60/1/3 (JTH 757P, YXI 3751, PTF 740L, GSX 865T, TOE 521N, ROK 471M). 3663 has been sold.

Thamesdown

The search for a pair of suitable double-deckers for school contracts has produced the extraordinary re-acquisition of Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/ECW H43/31F 197 (UMR 197T), latterly with Andy James of Tetbury! It has initially operated in Andy James livery, but with Thamesdown fleetnames, fleetnumbers and legal lettering. The other arrival is Leyland Atlantean AN68B/1R/ECW H43/31F 242 (FBV 512W) from Liver Line, but new to Ribble.

Thamesway FB

New at Ponders End, for London Transport contracted services 362/462 are Mercedes-Benz Vario/Marshall B27F 411-9 (R411-9 VPU).

The operation of Eastern National-liveried Bristol VRT/SL3s 3225/34 and Thamesway maroon/yellow-liveried 3113 from Hadleigh has continued to provide interest, although only 3225 was still active in mid-November, the others having fallen defective.

Tillingbourne, Cranleigh

An acquisition is MAN 11.190/Optare Vecta B42F 912 (P912 XUG).

Bedford YMT/Plaxton Derwent 694 (D694 WAU) is now both re-numbered and re-registered to 690 (MIL 4690). Sister 689 (MIL 4689), 690 and similar 216 (E216 MFX) are all fitted with new coach seats and diagonal seatbelts (now to DP53F layout).

IVECO 49.10/Carlyle 403 (G403 DPD) has passed to Emsworth & District, whilst unlucky Volvo B10M/Ikarus 285 (JIL 2285) has sustained severe damage in a head-on collision and has passed to Thomas of Ewell.

I should like to welcome Tillingbourne to the ranks of operators supplying quality source-data to 'Fleet News', for which thanks are offered.

Timeline

Ten Dennis Javelin/Neoplan Transliners are on order for 1998 delivery.

New are Optare Excel L1070/B38F 217-21/3 (R217 SBA etc), 217-21 at Bolton along with earlier 214-6 (R214-6 SBA) on service 137 (Bury-Manchester). 223 is at Lowton and in Sainsbury's livery for a service to the Leigh store.

Now withdrawn are Leyland Tiger 60 (G60 RND), Mercedes-Benz 709D 106 (H406 BVR) and Talbot Pullmans 140-2 (F394 DOA, L141/2 JVR), 106 passing to Vale of Manchester.

Transit ST

The first low-floor vehicles for this fleet are now due, in the form of Alexander ALX200-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs as 462-72 (R462-8 SEF, R469-72 MVN), the original order for seven being increased to 11. These are intended for services 59/60 in the Stockton area, where the local authority is enhancing their capability by building raised kerbs at bus stops for them; the additional vehicles are for service 13 (Middlesbrough-Hemlington). On entry into service, these SLFs will then allow between six and eight Leyland Lynxes to be transferred to Hartlepool (thereby ousting the last Bristol REs there) and six Volvo B6s to go to Darlington.

Reserved registrations marks P653-5 FEF, for diverted Volvo B10Ms 653-5 and P831-4 FEF, for diverted Volvo Olympians 831-4 have been surrendered.



Seen on entry into service is Oxford Citylink R4 OXF This Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M is part of a comprehensive upgrading of the service, involving the purchase of 12 new vehicles, and four late-model used examples.

New orders (to be confirmed) include double-deckers, with 10 new Volvo Olympians due for Transit in January; 16 Volvo B10Ms are also due, to be allocated to Hull (eight), Hartlepool (five) and Transit (three) during February and March. These are replacements for new vehicles due earlier but diverted elsewhere.

Acquisitions are also in the news this month, as a batch of 21 mid-life Leyland Titans are being received from East London, to be allocated to Transit (17) and Hartlepool (four). The batch is to be numbered 270-90 (NUW 604/6/34/42/3/8/9/59/64/6/8/73/5Y, A826/7/40/6/9 SUL, A905 SYE, A622/6 THV). 270-3 are earmarked for Hartlepool, the others for Transit. 284 is expected to be first completed with revised indicator display and outshopped in Stagecoach colours. Those allocated to Transit are intended to displace the remaining Transit green-liveried Dennis Dominators, 208/9/11/3 (A208/9/11 EHN, A213 FVN) and replace Leyland Fleetlines to enable 10 of that type to be transferred to Darlington stock.

Dominator 212 (A212 FVN) has been withdrawn, cannibalised for spare parts and it remains dispensed with. Also disposed of, from storage at Stockton, are Hartlepool Bristol RELLS 81 and cannibalised 90 (SEF 81L, GEF 190N), taken by Whiting, Pontefract (dealer). Former Hull Leyland Leopard driver trainer 502 (89 HBC) is now with Galaxy Travel of Redcar.

Newly in store at Stockton are Darlington Renault S75s 365/6 (J225/6 JJR) and Hull Leyland Atlantic exhibition bus 284 (WKH 284J). Hull MCW Metrobus 515 (LAT 515V) was stored briefly prior to returning to Hull for disposal, Darlington Renault S75 363 (H401 DMJ) prior to a return to Darlington and use, Hartlepool RE 87 (GEF 187N) before a return to Hartlepool for cannibalisation and Hartlepool Dennis Falcon 524 (YDC 24Y) prior to disposal.

The entire Stagecoach Kingston-upon-Hull fleet was formally transferred to Cleveland Transit ownership from 19 August comprising the following vehicles:

Leyland National 2 NL116LXCT/B24DL 60 (B60 WKH) Dennis Lancer/Duple C25DL 61 (YAY 21Y) Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton C53F 71-3/6/7 (K571 DFS etc) Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C53F 78-81 (P178-81 PRH) MCW Metrobus DR102/17/MCW H43/30F 114-9 (SAG 524-9W) Dennis Dominator/Alexander H43/32F 206-10 (B106-10 UAT) Dennis Dominator/East Lancs H43/28F 211-3 (C111-3 CAT) Dennis Dominator/East Lancs H45/30F 223-6/8/9/31-41 (C123-5/2/8/9/31 CAT, E132-41 SAT, E132-41 SAT) Dennis Dominator/East Lancs H45/31F 242-57 (F142-51 BKH, F152-7 HAT) Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B23F 341-54 (N341-8 KKH, P349-54 NKH) MCW Metrobus DR102/7/MCW H43/30F 515 (LAT 515V) MCW Metrobus DR102/17/MCW H43/30F 516-23 (SAG 516-23W) Scania N112CRB/East Lancs B50F 701-5 (F701-5 BAT) Scania N112CRB/East Lancs DP49F 706 (F706 CAG) Volvo B10M-55/Northern Counties B48F 707-18 (M707-18 KRH) Scania N112DRB/East Lancs H47/33F 800 (C100 HSJ) Scania N113DRB/East Lancs H51/37F 801-8 (G801-6 JRH, G807-8 LAG) Scania N113DRB/East Lancs H47/37F 809-16 (H809-16 WKH) Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties H47/29F 817-9 (M817-9 KRH)

Travel West Midlands NX

Further deliveries are Volvo B6LE/Wright B37F 568/9/75-9 (R568 XDA etc) and B10L/Wright B43F 1468-73 (R468-73 XDA).

A youthful acquisition is of 812 (P942 EMS), a former Alexander demonstrator Dennis Dart SLF.

Inter-company transfers see Leyland Nationals 1013 and 1850 (AOL 13T, TVP 850S) go to Smiths of Shennington. Now withdrawn and sold are Iveco 49.10s 486, 595 (E486 ONX, D595 NDA), Leyland Nationals 6869/88/90 (TVP 869S etc) and Leyland Fleetlines 6913/68/86/7 (WDA 913T etc).

Trent Buses

Deliveries comprise further Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 927-36 (R927-36 RAU) and Mercedes-Benz Vario 0.814/Plaxton Beaver B31F 276-84 (R276-84 RAU) and B27F 47 (R47 LNU). Darts 917-25/30 and Varios 276-81 are based at Derby, 282/3 at Sutton Junction whilst Vario 284 and Darts 931-6 are with Barton in its livery, the latter vehicles based at Ilkeston. Darts 926-9 carry revised Spordon Flyer route branding, 47 carrying a special livery for the Harlequin service from Derby City Centre to Heatherton. 280 was late into traffic due to exhibition at the Birmingham NEC Coach & Bus '97 show.

Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown demonstrator R460 VOP has been at work on service R11 (Nottingham-Ripley), based at Langley Mill during late October and early November.

Leyland Olympian 720 (C720 NNN) is now reinstated for further service.

Optare Vectas 801-4 (M801-4 PRA) have now lost Spordon Flyer branding after being displaced from this service by the new Dart SLFs. Optare Deltas 334-44 (K334-9 FAL, K640 FAU, K341-4 FAL) are now receiving route-branding for service R5 (Nottingham-Long Eaton-Derby), but Optare Sigma 369 (N369 VRC) has lost its branding for this service. Volvo B10Bs 124-8 (L124-8 LRA) now carry Trent Buses fleetnames in place of the Barton names they have carried from new.

New Volvo/Plaxton coaches 59-63 (R59, 960, 61-63 RAU) are allocated to the extended Nottingham-Derby-Chesterfield 'Red Arrow' service, replacing DAF/Plaxton coaches 1637/40/1/3 (D637 WNU etc), now withdrawn, although 1641 is now reinstated as a reserve coach for this service. Also retired are Leyland Nationals 422/32/7/8/44-8/50/1/3/9/73/6/82, 540 (GNU 569, KVO 432P, EGB 92T, PRR 438/44-8/50/1/3/9R, VCH 473/6S, XAL 482S, CWX 661T). 444 is now re-registered TTO 163R, the mark PRR 444R passing to a privately-owned car.

Disposals are of Leyland Olympians 713/21 (B713 HVO, C721 NNN) to Road Car; Leyland Nationals 419 (KCG 627L) to Aldershot & District Bus Owners Association, 444/5/76 (TTO 163R, PRR 445R, VCH 476S) to Derby Integrated Transport, 446 (PRR 446R) to Grovers of Ashbourne; Leyland Leopard 1246 (RVO 668L) to a private owner in Nuneaton for preservation and DAFs 1637/43 (D637/43 WNU) are now with Mayne of Manchester. The hulk of Leyland National 425 (GNU 572N) has gone to Looms, Spondon and 424/6/31/9/52 (GNU 571/3N, KVO 431P, PRR 439/52S) similarly to PVS, Carlton (dealer) along with SKG 919S, which had been intended to become 550. The site at Uttoxeter New Road, Derby, was finally vacated at the beginning of October, the last members of the workforce to be employed there being those in the paintshop, where the last vehicle outshopped was Optare Delta 343 (K343 FAL). All engineering support functions are now performed at the extended and refurbished Langley Mill site, first repaint there being Delta 344 (K344 FAL).



United AA

Acquisitions feature this month, with the arrival of a number of Leyland National 2s from the Yorkshire Bus Group's final clear-out of the breed. In from West Riding stock are Gardner 6HLXB re-engined NL116AL11/1R/B49F 3761-5 (VGB 93V, XUA 72-5X) and NL116HLXB/1R 3766-8 (EWT 206/8/10Y) and from Yorkshire Buses come NL116HLXB/1R/B49F 3769/70 (BPR 48, 49Y).

Inter-company transfers out of United stock see 756, 804/22 and 1422 (DUP 756S, XPT 804V, MEF 822W, CVN 174Y) go to Tees and 3104/6/7, 3718/23 (LUP 904T, PUP 506T, RUP 307V, WPT 718/23R) pass to Teesside (qv).

Now withdrawn are Bristol VRT/SL3 828 (PAJ 828X) and Mercedes-Benz L608D 2403 (C403 VVN).

Whiting of Ferrybridge (dealer) has taken VR 895 (PWR 445W) and Bristol LH6L 1703 (LPT 702T).

Group codes

AA	Arriva Passenger Services
BL	Blazefield Holdings
EY	EYMS Group
FB	FirstBus
GA	Go-Ahead Group
MT	MTL Holdings
NX	National Express
ST	Stagecoach Holdings
TR	Transit Holdings
YT	Yorkshire Traction

United Counties ST

East London Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR/Leyland T688 (OHV 688Y) is now on loan here after a period with Cambus. It is suggested that they may appear here to enable withdrawal of Bristol VRT/SL3s.

Universal Buses, Walsden

A further Dennis Dart SLF/UJV B38F reported is R812 WJA. Optare Excel demonstrators P447 SWX has also been in use along with Optare Prisma demonstrator P441 SWX and now new Excels R817-9 WJA are in stock, first of a large number of further new vehicles reported due here.

Commercial services 20 and 182 (Rochdale-Manchester) are now being operated, as well as schools work referred to before (this largely in the Stockport area). All vehicles are in all-over unrelieved white, with fleetnames carried above windows.

Universitybus, Hatfield

New are more Dennis Dart SLF/Wright Crusader R652-4 VBM, joined by R529/30/2 YRP, these being on lease from Dawson Rentals of Milton Keynes (the latter also in all-over white and without fleetnames), bringing the stock of Wright-bodied SLFs to 14 here, operating all of services 600/601/602/657 and 330/340.

The unique Thamesdown Marshall-bodied MAN P190 SHR has been on loan from Dart of Paisley briefly to cover for fire-damaged Marshall Minibus P980 PTM. The final Leyland National, THX 204S has been withdrawn.

Vale, Manchester

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander (Belfast) B23P 418/9 HNF are now at work.

Wallace Arnold

Not previously recorded is Volvo B10M-62/Van Hool P306 VWR, part of the 1997 delivery.

Walls, Northenden

Bus services passed to Stagecoach Manchester operation in October, no vehicles (or premises) being involved in the deal. The entire and very modern fleet is up for sale — the latest DAF SB220/Ikarus Citybus R10, 11 WAL having only just been taken into stock a few weeks before.

The last day of operation was 1 November.

Warrington Borough Transport

Leyland Atlantic 83 (TTB 83S) has passed to PVS, Carlton (dealer).

Weardale Motor Services, Stanhope

Leyland Atlantic 83 (TTB 83S) has passed to PVS, Carlton (dealer).

News comes this month of several very long-serving vehicles with this respected independent operator. Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard NPT 6J, new here in 1971, has now been withdrawn. 1970 Leyland Atlantic GUP 6H, with Leeds City-style Roe bodywork and the first rear-engined double-decker in the fleet, has been sold two years after withdrawal — apparently never well-favoured, its regular duty for 25 years had been one return journey daily from Stanhope to Wolsingham Comprehensive School until withdrawal in 1995.

Ex-Wigan Leyland Titan PD2 JJP 502 remains in stock although withdrawn as does the unusual Leyland Tiger PS2 rebuilt in 1958 with Roe H37/28RD body, YUP 6 (originally KUP 435).

One of Yorkshire Rider's new Alexander Royale-bodied Volvo Olympians for Leeds CityLink, 5614 (R614 JUB), in Leeds.

MARK BAILEY

Western National FB

Eighteen Dennis Darts are still outstanding from current orders, most due to go to Cornwall.

Acquisitions are Leyland Tiger TR11/3H/Plaxton Paramount 3200 C53F 2222/3 (A204 RHT, A206 SAE), both based at Camborne, the former put to work in its former Badgerline colours.

All repaints are now in plain style, without the unusual and not unattractive 'flags'; indeed, the 'flags' are being removed from vehicles (by means of heat-guns), leaving some rather bare-looking minis and midis apparently.

Ford Transit 190Ds 575/7 (C472 TAY, C527 TJF), Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4Rs 3530/5 (FDV 821/8V), Freight Rover Sherpa 7010 (D955 NOJ), Bristol LHS 7021 (TPJ 58S) and LH6L 9501 (NTT 322M) are currently held for disposal, but withdrawn Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 40-42, 58 (C201/2/11 PCD, C673 ECV), Leyland Tiger 1017 (B566 BOK), Bristol VRT/SL2 1084 (HTC 728N), Leyland Leopards 3418/25/50, 3515 (XBF 57S, GTA 806N, SFJ 150R, ETH 68V), Freight Rover Sherpa 7007 (D741 JUB), Bedford YRQ 7023 (HAF 819L), Bristol VRT/SL3 WDM 341R and Ford Transit C568 TUT are all under cannibalisation and will be sold as scrap. Withdrawn L608Ds 59, 62, 71/6/8/9, 87/9, 110/5/40/8/64/78/9 (C674/7/89/91/3/4 ECV, C784/6 FRL, C953/8 GAF, C229 HCV, C101 HGL, C214 HJN, C378/9 RUY), Bristol VRT/SL3 1109 (UTO 832S) and Leopards 3444, 3500/8 (SFJ 144R, KTT 808P, SFJ 158R) are held in reserve.

Yorkshire Bus Group AA

The remainder of the new batch of Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F 764/7-70 (R764 DUB etc) is now in traffic with West Riding at Belle Isle.

Following delivery of 758-70 (R758-70 DUB), Optare MetroRiders 701-7 (H701-7 UNW) from West Riding stock and sisters 712/3 (H712/3 UNW) from Selby & District are now withdrawn — these being amongst the

first Optare-built MetroRiders to be taken out of service nationally. Also withdrawn are South Yorkshire Leyland Olympian 506 (CWR 506Y), West Riding 513 (CWR 513Y) and Yorkshire Woollen 522/3/7 (CWR 522Y etc), 523 latterly on loan to West Riding at Belle Isle.

Another pair of buses sold to Crosville Cymru comprises Leyland National 2 156 (KWA 30W) and Olympian 527 (CWR 527Y). North Eastern Bus Group has taken Leyland National 2s 101-4/6/8/10/9/25-8 (XUA 72-5X, EWT 206/8/10Y, VBG 93V, CCY 619V, BPR 48/9Y, HED 204/5V).

West Riding Leyland Lynx 255 (E255 TUB) has been out of service for a considerable time since suffering fire damage in 1996 and is now back in traffic after what almost amounts to rebodying by the company (to standard Lynx design) by West Riding's Belle Isle workshops. A giveaway of its new metalwork is its array of rearlights, to latest regulatory dictat!

Following the reallocation of Yorkshire Woollen Olympian 602 to Heckmondwike, no double-deckers now remain at Dewsbury. Twin 603 is first to carry a new style Selby & District fleetname, which reads 'Selby & District Buses', in West Riding style.

Yorkshire Rider Group FB

The first of the batch of new Volvo Olympians in service with Leeds City Link are YV3YNA/Alexander Royale H43/29F 5606-19 (R606-19 JUB), with 5620/1 due, 5611 exhibited at the Birmingham NEC show prior to use. They feature First Bus corporate interiors and have solid rear-ends without any glazing, presenting what is described as a resultant 'massive red area'.

A further two ex-Greater Manchester Leyland Atlanteans added to stock are AN68D/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F 6451/2 (ANA 556Y, A737 NNA), allocated to Bradford Traveller, whilst sisters 6436-9/43/5-50 are now in traffic with Huddersfield, freshly bedecked in Kingfisher colours. 6444 is the last to be prepared for use.

Optare Excel demonstrator P447 SWX finished its tour on loan with Leeds City Link at Cherry Row.



The bus now standing on platform one . . . !
Highlighting the shortage of suitable storage space are these Dennis Dart SLFs with Marshall Capital bodywork. They remain unused due to a lack of agreement regarding Isle of Man Transport's new route network.
TONY QUINE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks go to each and every one of you who has been kind enough to send your very welcome reports to 'Fleet News', 'Fleet News International' and 'Halfcab Corner', including this month:

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May we wish all our readers and our many contributors a happy Christmas and a peaceful and successful 1998.

New Dennis Darts 3308/10 are now in traffic at Leeds City Link Bramley garage.

Leyland Atlantean 6198 (JUM 198V) has been on loan from Huddersfield to Bradford.

Now withdrawn are Calderline Leyland Tiger 1608 (WVS 410), Leeds City Link Atlantean 6113 (LUG 113P), Bradford Traveller Atlantean 6186 (GWR 186T) and Kingfisher Huddersfield Leyland Fleetlines 7097, 7137/44/8/52/6 (WUM 97S, CWU 137/44/8/52/6T) — these being the last of the long line of Fleetlines in use here. The last six Fleetlines in stock are all with Calderline at Halifax and are 7073/9/82/6/8 (JNW 73V, JUM 79, 82/6/8V) with Northern Counties bodywork and last-remaining Roe-bodied example, 7155 (CWU 155T).

Atlanteans 6140/59/74 (SUA 140R, WNW 159/74S) are now transferred for use by the driving school, at Bramley as 9428-30, whilst perhaps surprisingly, older 6058/61 (HWT 44/7N) are now reinstated at Bradford Traveller (last with Quickstep) along with 6113 (LUG 113P — latterly with Leeds City Link). Trainer Fleetline 7033 (MNW 33P) has been retired, last used as such in mid-September.

Tiger 1608 is now with Brewers, whilst PVS, Carlton (dealer) has taken previously-withdrawn Atlantean 6073 (HWT 59N) and Fleetlines 7054/92, 7120/1/49 (RNU 54R, WUM 92, 120/1S, CWU 149T) and 7244 (BVR 52T).

The trial period of 'bus-buddies' (conductors, in case you were wondering!) in Bradford on services 608/609/688 came to an end on 27 September after just three months.

York Pullman

Six Dennis Dart SLFs are due for City of York Council contracted services.

Yorkshire Terrier YT

New are 10.5m Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte B40F 126-30 (R126-30 TWF), all in green and yellow livery without white and with 'Super Low Floor bus' branding on waist panels and 'Sheffield's Friendly buses' on cantrails!

Yorkshire Traction YT

New is 10.5m Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte B39F 442 (R442 THL), route-branded for the service from Barnsley to Its Hospital. A very youthful acquisition is similar 441 (P718 WFR), a former Spryte demonstrator, whilst from Ipswich comes MCW Metrorider MF155/DP31F 341 (F220 PPV).

Ex-Road Car Bristol VRT/SL3s 1929/44/57 (LVL 807V, KTL 27V, PFE 541V) are now in use at Shafton, still in Road Car livery, but with Yorkshire Traction fleetnames, primarily on schools work. Although Road Car fleetnumber plates remain on the vehicles, they are regarded as 929/44/57 here.

MCW Metrobus DP 703 (D703 NWG) is now back in service after reseating with bus-seats, now H46/33F ex DPH43/29F, with 704 (D704 NWG) to follow. Ex-Barnsley & District Northern Counties-bodied Dodge D867 MDB is now at work converted to an ancillary van, numbered L85.

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount 56 (M656 VWE) is now re-registered 2316 HE and sister 57 (M957 VKY) is now YTC 838 similarly.

MCW Metroriders 538/55 (E538 VKY, E538 YKW) are now sold to Strathay; Andrews-Sheffield Omnibus now has MCW Metrobuses 721/2 (KJW 304V, GOG 154W) and Road Car now has Renault S75 373 (G873 WML).

I am grateful to regular company correspondent Steve Sanderson for welcome increased coverage to now give source data on this fleet as well as Road Car.

ISLE OF MAN

Isle of Man Transport

The new Dennis Dart SLFs are arriving a little in advance of agreement regarding the introduction of the controversial new route network, which represents a most fundamental change to Manx operations. This looks set to remove modern double-deckers from primary corridors used by visitors (who do tend to prefer that 'top-deck' view!).

Once the Darts enter traffic, the former Portsmouth Leyland Atlanteans and the acquired Leyland Olympians are to be relegated to school duties in the main — their temporary non-withdrawal representing a fleet expansion in the short-term. The longer-term will depend upon fleet requirements following the settling-in of the Marshall Dart fleet.

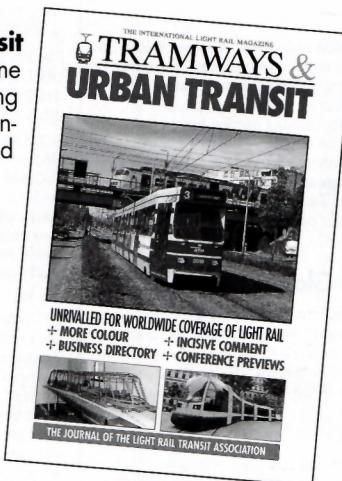
Leyland Nationals 25/8-30/2/3 (MAN 25H, MAN 28-30/2/3N) are the last of this long-lived breed here; when first introduced by 14 (MAN 14A), they were of interest by virtue of having 'export' moquette seating, rather than the ubiquitous unwelcoming plastic, standard in all UK bus variants at the time.

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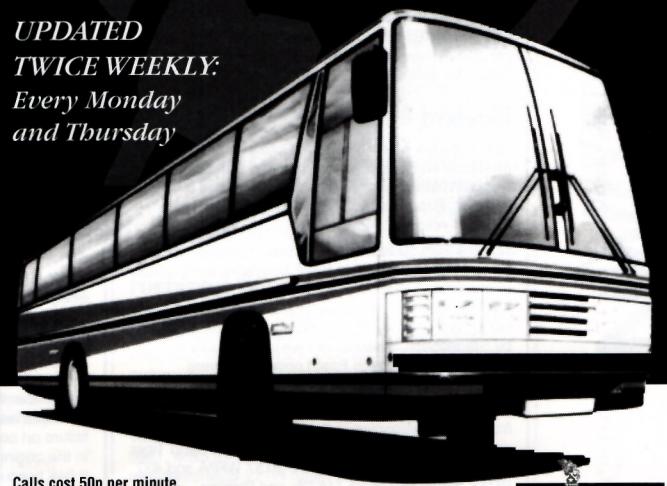
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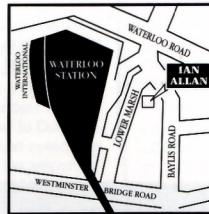


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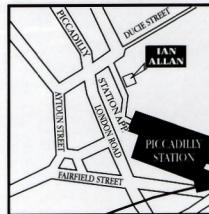
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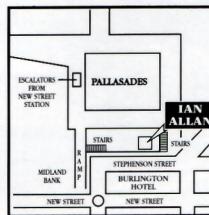
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Bookshops

EVERYTHING FOR ENTHUSIASTS!

Reports to be sent to Sandy Macdonald, 12 Morton Gardens, Maxwell Park, Glasgow G41 4AF, to reach him by 17 June for the July issue.

Addison, Callander

Alexander DP23F-bodied Renault S56 E104 JNH and Carlyle DP16F-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa G271 GKG were purchased by this operator in October. They were previously owned by Nottingham City Transport (no 34) and Reed, Christchurch respectively. Talbot Freeway F589 HUS was sold to Ramm (dealer), Sudden at the same time.

Allander, Milngavie

Van Hool-bodied Volvo coaches CLO1 (9446 AT, N243 OUS) and CLO2 (XAT 11X, L635 AYS, LSK 844) were re-registered N243 OUS and L502 YUS in September.

Avondale, Greenock

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D F300 RMH (HSK 177, F300 RMH) was repainted into a metallic mauve livery in September, together with similar 100 (E518 JHG). Neither now carries a fleet number. A new Plaxton 33-seat Mercedes-Benz coach is due for delivery early in 1998.

Bluebird Buses ST

New vehicles which arrived in October comprised 636-40 (R636-40 RSE), Plaxton Interurban DP51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 which have been allocated to Macduff, Peterhead (637/8), and Aberdeen (639/40) respectively.

No less than 10 former Docklands Transit Mercedes-Benz 811Ds with Carlyle B29F bodywork were added to this fleet in October, comprising 251 (H985 FTT), 254/5/2/49 (H784-6/9 GTA), and 245-8/50 (H105-8/10 HDV). With the recent acquisition of Transit Holdings by Stagecoach, these buses were technically last owned by Stagecoach East London, but were numbered 367/93-5/8, 404-7/9 by their previous owner. Several coaches were also transferred to this fleet from sister companies in September/October, comprising Duple Laser 2 C49F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2RHs 436 (927 GTA, B157 WRN) and 437 (B158 WRN) ex-Ribble 1157/8; and Plaxton Paramount 3200 C53F-bodied TRCTL11/3R 438 (TSU 638, FKK 838Y) ex-Western Buses 171. Former Western Buses Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers NIB 5232/3 (B47/8 DWE) reported as transferred in last month, are listed by the company as 439/40 and not 469/70 as previously stated.

Bowman, Craignure

For a period of one month from 16 October till 15 November, this company once again obtained Argyll & Bute Council contracts to run the local services from Craignure to Tobermory and Fionnphort, the school transport journeys during this period being run by Highlands & Islands, Craignure.

Boyce, Milton of Campsie

The regular performer on the new Kirkintilloch-Glasgow service is C402 VVN, a Mercedes-Benz L608D with Reeve Burgess B20F bodywork previously with Dart, Paisley. It is finished in an all-over red livery with JB Travel fleetnames.

Bryans, Denny

R983 FYS is a Caetano-bodied Toyota BB50R coach which was new to this operator in October.

Cairngorm, Aviemore

OAS 287R (MIL 9755, OOX 825R) is a Leyland National 11351A/1R-DP45F acquired by November from Highland Country where it was numbered N25. It is now in a red and grey livery just like that used by Highland Omnibuses in the early 1980s!

Carrick, Ayr

After many years of competing with Western Buses on the Ayr-Dalmeny route, this company has now reached an agreement with the larger operator which resulted in the introduction of a joint timetable from 6 October. The Carrick Sunday service has been withdrawn and times on other days of the week have been revised, interchangeability of tickets is available to allow passengers greater choice of journey times, a joint timetable leaflet has been produced by Western, and the agreement has been registered with the Office of Fair Trading.

Cityliner, Port Glasgow

Four Volvo vehicles purchased in August for this express service operation were Plaxton C53F-bodied B10M-61 F644 UVT ex-McCormick, Airdrie; Plaxton C46F-bodied B10M-60s G453/4 VSL ex-Rapson's Coaches; and similar G389 PNV ex-Wessex 165.

Clydeside AA

Vehicles acquired with the business of Bridge Coaches, Paisley at the end of October comprised the nine Mercedes-Benz buses owned, North West Conversions C25F-bodied 709D E124 VGG; Optare StarRider B26F-bodied 811Ds F34, 46 CWY, F906/20 YWY; North West Conversions C24F-bodied 609Ds G917/67 CLV; and Dornmobile B29F-bodied 709Ds K95/6 RGA. The latter pair continued to be used in Bridge Coaches livery from Inchinnan depot, but the others were all in storage at Greenock depot by 1 November.

306 (L970 VGE), a Mercedes-Benz 709D with Wadham Stringer B29F bodywork, entered service in September having been acquired with the Argyll business last July. Apparently, it had suffered engine failure on acquisition and as a result was not included in the original numbering sequence for ex-Arnyll stock. It has been allocated to the GMS operation.

199, 200/15/6 (H709/11/01/10 UNW) are further 1991 B23F Optare MetroRider MR09s acquired in September from West Riding, where they were numbered 709/11/01/10. All have been repainted into full fleet livery and allocated to Johnstone depot. Another addition in September was ECW B43F-bodied Bristol LH6L MGR 659P, previously Northumbria 9989. It is to be used for driver training purposes.

This company ceased to be employed on Citylink work after 19 October when the company's workings on service 900 (Gourock-Edinburgh) passed to Parks of Hamilton. Van Hool C53F-bodied Scania K113CRB coaches 136-9 (N136-9 YMS) were sold to the latter firm from 20 October, for continued operation on the service presumably pending the arrival of new vehicles. Citylink-liveried Van Hool-bodied Leyland Tiger 140 was placed in storage at that time.

Rootes-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 236 (D25 KKP) and similar Reeve Burgess-bodied 237/8 (C707/8 JMB) were transferred to the McGill, Barrhead fleet in October. 236 had only been in GMS livery since September when it had been painted out of F&L livery and renumbered from 20, and as a result it had been repainted into different liveries three times in three months!

The F&L fleet has received more Alexander-bodied Renault S56s in the shape of 11/2 (E338/25 WYS) which were previously in the main fleet and numbered 338/25. Together with other recent transfers from the main fleet, they have ousted Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 11 (HIL 8439, C214 EKJ), 12 (LAZ 5765, D650 CVN), 13 (LAZ 5964, D652 CVN), 14 (LAZ 5786, C203 PCD), 15 (LAZ 5929, C203 EKJ), 16 (LAZ 5962, C221 EKJ), 18 (D36 KKP), 23/4 (D203/6 SKD) which are all now withdrawn.

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 170 (4225 FM, A170 UGB) and Alexander-bodied Leyland Fleetline 883 (HSD 83V) have been re-registered A170 UGB and WDS 220V respectively.

Northern Counties-bodied Renault S56s 380 (E108 JPL) and 381/2 (G103/4 DPB) had all been broken up at Greenock depot by October, as had ECW-bodied Leyland Olympian coach 897 (HSB 874Y, YSU 867, GKE 445Y) which had been struck from behind by a lorry whilst waiting to make a right turn into Greenock depot. Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 718 (BSJ 918T) was sold to Cygnet, Darton in August.

The F&L operation spread to Greenock on 26 September when lemon-liveried buses replaced GMS vehicles on service 548 (Town Centre-Drillmillhill) where acute competition with Orion, Wemyss Bay has been taking place this year. Notable amongst other recent service revisions have been the withdrawal of 12 (Paisley-Neilston) eliminating competition with McGill on this route, and the withdrawal of 70 (Paisley Cross-Glenbrittle Drive) which is now served by Dart Buses.

Collison, Stonehouse

A new performer on the tendered Glasgow inter-station service 398 in November was R941 AMB, a Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O814D in all-over white with no fleetnames. Adamson-bodied Mercedes-Benz 711D P991 TGB has been re-registered P100 BUS.

Dart, Paisley

A42-5 (R412-5 XFL) are new Marshall B40F-bodied MAN 11.190s which joined this fleet in November in full fleet livery and are similar to the former demonstrator P190 SHR, also now in fleet livery.

Leyland National N28 (AHH 209T) was being prepared for service in September and similar N31 (THN 806V) was likely to follow suit soon after. It had not been expected that they would be used other than for spares. Mercedes-Benz L608D 524 (D524 RCK) has been returned to traffic and renumbered M57. Similar 551 (D551 RCK) is also still in use but has not been given a new fleetnumber yet.

Withdrawn Leyland National N24 (NIL 5373, THX 179S) has been sold for scrap.

Recently introduced service 3/3A (Paisley-Bridge of Weir via Georgetown) was withdrawn on 20 October.

Dunn, Port Glasgow

Three Mercedes-Benz L608Ds were purchased in September comprising Alexander-bodied D502 NWG together with Reeve Burgess-bodied C434 VVN and D212 SKD, the latter pair being only for spares. They were previously Dart, Paisley 522, 434, 532 respectively. Another addition in September was ESB 17X, a Volvo B58-61 with Plaxton C53F coachwork last owned by Cruikshank, Ellon.

Essbee, Coatbridge

B223 VHW, the MCW CH57/16F-bodied MCW Metroliner DR130 which never entered service with either this company or the associated Highlands & Islands business, has been sold to London Pride for sightseeing work.

Fife Scottish ST

Leyland Titan 784 had been rebuilt from H44/26D to H44/29F by August. Jonckheere Mistral-bodied Volvo articulated coach 561 went to Thames Transit on loan for two weeks from 14 August.

AEC Matador recovery truck 1034 (Q204 XSC) had been re-registered TVS 347 and went on loan to the Scottish Vintage Bus Museum by September.

First Stop, Renfrew

G870 SKE is another B22F Talbot Pullman to enter this fleet ex-Ashton, Port Glasgow. Most of the vehicles owned are now in a standardised red and white livery with yellow First Stop Travel fleetnames.



Greater Glasgow has 10 long-wheelbase Northern Counties Palatine 2-bodied Volvo Olympians, including VO156 (R656 DUS), seen at Mossspark
SANDY MACDONALD

While a great deal has been said and written about the current bus war which developed last year in the Glasgow area between FirstBus and Stagecoach, less has been said about the increasing amount of competition which FirstBus is experiencing from other firms now running local services in the traditional territory of its Greater Glasgow and Kelvin operating companies.

Until about three years ago, the level of competition within Glasgow and its immediate surroundings was relatively small, and it was generally assumed by interested observers that Strathclyde Buses was seen as a more difficult target than some other major operators in the west of Scotland. As a result, levels of competition against Clydeside Buses, Kelvin Central and Western Buses had grown in comparison to that against Strathclyde Buses.

With changes in the ownership of the major companies, that position has altered. As highlighted last month and in 'Scottish Fleet News', Western Buses has now got virtually no small operators running against it in the Ayrshire area although Arriva and FirstBus do offer competition on certain routes. When the Cowie Group acquired Clydeside Buses, efforts were clearly made to mop up some of the competition through full or partial acquisitions or 'co-operation', with the result that Arriva does not now have to contend with Ashton Coaches, Bridge Coaches, Dart Buses or McGill's Bus Service, while accommodations have clearly been reached with others. There does, however, remain a sizeable number of other firms competing with Arriva, particularly in Greenock and Paisley.

Kelvin Central had followed a policy of acquiring competitors in the early 1990s. This approach continued after its merger with Strathclyde Buses, with local services being taken over from Golden Eagle, Irvine's Coaches and Loch Lomond Coaches thereafter, but this process appears to have stopped after acquisition of SB Holdings by FirstBus in 1996.

Since then, however, there has been a steady increase in small operators willing to compete for local service business in the areas where either Greater Glasgow or Kelvin is predominant. In south-west Glasgow Govan Minibus Co has been replaced by First Stop Travel with an expanded network of services in the Govan district, Puma Coaches has held on tenaciously to its Govan/Pollok services, Hutchison of Renfrew has continued to develop the Govan/Paisley service, Riverside of Paisley has developed its City Centre/Nitshill route, and Dickson of Erskine has continued to claim a share of the market on Paisley Road West between the City Centre and Paisley.

These established operations have now been joined by Link Travel with a local service centred on the Parkhead Forge shopping centre, JB Travel with a service between the City Centre and Kirkintilloch, and S&A Coaches with a frequent service on Pollokshaws Road between the City Centre and Eastwood Toll. New operators have also started in Clydebank to compete with both Kelvin and Greater Glasgow services, and extend into Knightswood and Partick. Carlton Coaches, DB Travel, PD Travel have started up in this area, and John Morrow Coaches has also returned to local service work. Kelvin services further west in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven are now having to compete with those of McColl's Coaches.

GCT FB

Vehicles transferred from this fleet to Greater Glasgow during November comprised MCW Metroriders GM7, 10/4, 32/3, 46/7, 50, 60 and Mercedes-Benz 811Ds MA133-8/49/55, the latter two having only been allocated to GCT in late-October.

Many MCW Metroriders previously operated in this fleet, although latterly possibly with Greater Glasgow or Kelvin, were sold to Wigley (dealer), Carlton in October comprising GM2 (E996 WNS), GM3-5, 19, 20 (E928/30/2/1/9 XYS), GM22, 40, 75/7 (E315/3/0/6 YDS), GM42/4/9, 57/8, 61/2, 72/3 (E180/2/8, 202/5/8/9, 195/6 BNS), and GM65-7 (F113-5 NPU) which were new to Colchester Borough Transport. Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean GLA1325 (LSU 382V) was also sold to Wigley at that time.

Gillen, Port Glasgow

Northern Counties B22F-bodied Dodge S46s LAZ 4475 (D424 NNA) and LAZ 6739 (D428 NNA) were acquired in August, having previously been Clydeside 002/3 respectively. Robin Hood-bodied Iveco 49.10 C518 DYM was sold to Orion, Wemyss Bay in September.

Glen, Port Glasgow

D950 UDY is an Alexander DP19F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D acquired from Scottish, Port Glasgow.

Grampian FB

Vehicles repainted into the ivory and green fleet livery recently have included Leyland Atlantean 320 and Mercedes-Benz O405G 001, the latter having previously been ivory and red for its operation by Leicester Citybus. Leyland Olympian 110 has, however, lost these colours in favour of an overall contravision advertisement for Northsound Radio to striking effect.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean 298 (LRS 298W) is another example of its type to be sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall while similar 279 (HRS 279W) was loaned to Lowland during September and October.

Former Aberdeen Corporation Daimler CVG6 160 (DRS 360), new in 1951 with a Weymann body but given an Alexander H37/29R body nine years later, passed in November from the Angus Transport Group to Mills, Aberdeen for continued restoration. Work is now continuing on this bus in Aberdeen with the aim of having it completed in time for the 1998 celebrations mentioned previously.

Greater Glasgow FB

More new buses which entered service in October or November include Wright B43F-bodied Scania L113CRLs SS30-9, 41 (R130-9/41 GSF) and Northern Counties H43/29F-bodied Volvo Olympians VO157-63 (R657-63 DUS), all of which have been allocated to Larkfield depot.

With the arrival of these Scania, busy cross-city service 38 has been converted to single-deck operation, resulting in an increase in the number of passengers having to stand at peak times, a move unlikely to tempt many drivers out of their cars.

New Volvo B10BLE SV563 has Plaxton Prestige B44F bodywork which, like the new Scania, carries 'Super Low Floor Easy Access Bus' lettering. It does not, however, have the standard FirstBus interior.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians GLO3-5 (C810 KHS, C113/4 BTS) were renumbered LO3-5 in October. Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans LA1416/7 (RDS 605/6W) became driver training buses in September.

Vehicles transferred to this fleet from GCT during November comprised MCW Metroriders GM7, 10/4, 32/3, 46/7, 50, 60 and Mercedes-Benz 811Ds MA133-8/49/55, the latter two having only been allocated to GCT in late-October. Leyland Olympians LO8, 9 were transferred to Kelvin in October and MCW Metrorider MM52 moved in the opposite direction, although they all continue to work out of Possilpark depot.

The latest vehicles reported to be in all over red comprise Ailsa A103; Leyland Olympians LO4, 69, 71; MCW Metroriders GM64, 74; Volvo B6 MV21; Volvo B10M SV407; Volvo Citybuses AH61/4; and Volvo Olympians VO63, 80/2.

Although it has not been practicable to report vehicles withdrawn by the Strathclyde Buses group during the past year or so due to the number of subsequent reinstatements or transfers within the group, one particularly notable withdrawal in October was that of Marshall H47/39F-bodied Volvo Citybus AH1 (ESU 378X) which was the prototype Citybus built in 1982.

Another list of buses sold to Wigley (dealer), Carlton in October/November comprises Alexander-bodied Ailsa B55-10 A15 (CSU 223X) which had been fire-damaged; Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1 LA791 (OYS 188M); similar LA1222/4/31/9/50 (XUS 593/5, 602/10/21S), LA1251/3/65-7/82/3/8/94/9, 1303/5 (FSU 68, 70, 82-4, 99, 100/5/11/6/20/2T), 1317-9 (LSU 374-6V), LA1359 (RDS 573W); together with MCW Metroriders MM69 (F344 MGB, 88 D 31237) which was new to Dublin Bus and M73/4 (E308/9 YDS). It should be noted that, as with the list given last month, due to the amount of vehicle transfers between Kelvin, GCT and this fleet, some of these vehicles may have been used last by one of the other two companies.

Hall, Kennoway

Duple C35F-bodied Ford R1014 NSC 682X (LIB 3899, KSC 702X) was acquired in October ex-Robertson, Edzell. Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 507D E772 MSC went to that firm in exchange.

Harte, Greenock

R631 EYS is the first of two new Mercedes-Benz O814Ds with Plaxton Beaver 2 B29F bodywork for this fleet. It arrived in October and has been named 'Rainbow Rider'.

Highland Country NX

Four more vehicles transferred from Travel Dundee in November comprise Alexander H44/34F-bodied Ailsa B55-10s CSL 602V, DSP 923/8/30V which were numbered 2, 23/8, 30 by their previous owner. All entered service in their previous livery from Aviemore depot, or Fort William (DSP 928V).

Van Hool C46F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 V271 (JAZ 9851, MBS 271W, TRM 144, TGD 767W) has been re-registered MBS 271W again and repainted all over yellow prior to being sold.

Leyland National 11351A/1R N25 (MIL 9755, OOX 825R) has been sold to Cairngorm, Aviemore. Marshall-bodied Iveci TurboDaily 59.12 P6 (L380 PAS) is now with Appleford, Shepperton while Alexander-bodied Daimler Fleetline D920 (SMS 120P) has gone to Booth, Glasgow for preservation.

Kelvin FB

P819 YUM, a Plaxton Pointer B35F-bodied Dennis Dart SLF previously allocated to the Yorkshire Rider fleet and numbered 3306, appears to have been transferred to this fleet and was allocated to Stevenston depot from 22 October for a period of three weeks. It was being used by Yorkshire Rider in all over red and remains in this garb.

SS40 (R140 GSF) is a Scania L113CRL with Wright B43F bodywork which was added to this fleet in November and was also put to work from Stevenston depot on the Ardrossan-Kilmarnock service. It was not anticipated that this would be a long-term arrangement.

Leyland Olympians LO8, 9 were transferred from Greater Glasgow in October and MCW Metrorider MM52 moved in the opposite direction, although they all continue to work out of Possilpark depot.

Leyland Olympian coaches LOC102 (C448 BKM), LOC103-5 (C212/3/1 UPD) were renumbered LO102-5 in October.

More repaints reported into all over red comprise Leyland Leopard SL253; Leyland Tigers ST319/70/89; MCW Metrorobs DM166; MCW Metroriders MM24/8; and Volvo B10Ms SV435/8/48/62/4, 531.

Vehicles sold to Wigley (dealer), Carlton in October include Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3C/3R SL121 (MHS 39P), similar PSU3G/4R SL272 (LUS 432Y), and Duple Dominant-bodied Volvo B58-56 SV401 (LGE 724Y) which was new to Hutchison, Overtown.

Kirkpatrick, Banchory

Acquired some time ago as a replacement for accident-damaged 908 (C805 SDY) was 916 (D120 NUS), a Mercedes-Benz L608D with Alexander B21F body from Mairs Coaches where it was numbered 743.

With reference to the May issue, Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-61 LSK 572 (F103 HSO) is numbered 917 and not 916 as previously reported.

Lawson, Methven

H157 CSP (A8 TPT, H855 AHS) is a Volvo B10M-60 with Plaxton C49Ft coachwork acquired in September ex-Tayside 248 (TC13) as a replacement for Plaxton C53F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3ARZ F775 GNA, sold to Kirkby (dealer), Anston in exchange.

Link, Glasgow

The registration for the local service between Tollcross and Greenfield introduced recently was cancelled with effect from 8 December.

Lochview, Greenock

There has been a considerable expansion of the scope of this business since the summer with a separate, new company having been established under the name of Reliable Coaches. The company also appears to have, or have had, an interest in Schoolbus Scotland Ltd which is trading on various express services as Cityliner. The Lochview Coaches name also appears to be giving way to Superior Travel and the impression is that vehicles are to some extent interchangeable between the fleets.

Plaxton Beaver 2 B29F-bodied Mercedes-Benz O814Ds R465 GGA and R578 GDS are the new buses ordered for use on tendered service 300 between Glasgow Airport and Clydebank. They are finished in the metallic silver Superior Travel livery and carry 'Superior Travel, The Lochview Group' legal lettering. Another acquisition in October for use mainly on recently-won school contracts was ECW H43/31F-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB VVV 954W ex-United Counties 954 while a further arrival in November was R249 DJR, a Mercedes-Benz 614D with Adamson C24F coachwork.

Lothian

Further to last month's issue, Leyland Atlanteans 621-5 (GSC 621-5X) have been sent to York for use with York Classic Coaches, and have replaced similar 596-8 (JSX 596-8T) which have been withdrawn from service. Also gone from the York allocation is Duple Dominant C53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3F/4R 53 (USX 53V) which has been sold to Goodwin (dealer), Barnsley.

Back in the Capital, vehicles withdrawn and placed in storage recently comprise Duple C53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3F/4R 51 (USX 51V); similar PSU3E/4Rs 248-50 (NSX 248-50T); Duple C49F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R 55 (PSC 55Y); Alexander H45/30D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1Rs 589-91/4/5 (JSX 589-91/4/5T), 601-4/6-9/11-20 (OSC 601V etc); and similar AN68C/1Rs 626-9 (GSC 626-9X). In the normal Lothian manner, these vehicles will no doubt be sold for breaking in due course.

While few Lothian buses now escape this fate these days, reader Bob Lee of Essex has pointed out that 1967 Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1 883 (JSC 883E) is still being used by Boon's Coaches of Boreham, near Chelmsford, on school contract work despite its 30 years, and has just been repainted for further use.

Two recently withdrawn Leyland Atlanteans which have found new roles for the present are 605 (OSC 605V) which has been sold to Teen Challenge in Edinburgh, and 610 (OSC 610V) which remains with the company and is currently being used as temporary office accommodation within Central Garage.

Lowland FB

As anticipated, Plaxton Pointer 2-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs 219-21/3-9 (R219-21/3-9 GSF) were in the course of delivery to Dalkeith depot in late October

with 221/4-9 having been noted in service by the beginning of November. They incorporate the standard FirstBus interior and digital front, side and rear destination/number displays. They are being used on a sequence of linked routes comprising 113 (Pencaitland-Edinburgh), which changes to 315 (Edinburgh-Penicuik), then 141 (Penicuik-Stoneybank), and then finally 138 (Stoneybank/Musselburgh circular) before reversing the order.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean HRS 279V of Grampian Transport (279) was on loan to this company during September and October.

Alexander-bodied Ailsa 1058 has been given a rather unusual all-over advertisement for the Clydesdale Bank. Apart from the front, which is in normal fleet colours, the rest of the bus is yellow with contravision covering the windows and displaying pictures of various types of chair. Wording is kept to a minimum and the effect is certainly eye-catching. Similar 1085 has been painted into a special all-over navy and white livery promoting the Bank of Scotland Scottish Team's appearance in the forthcoming 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. The design also features the team's thistle logo 'stencilled' on passenger windows, and the only fleet identification is a green on cream SMT f board carries on the front of the vehicle. Renault S56 1466 and Optare MetroRiders 1503/6 have been repainted into SMT FirstBus livery.

McColl, Balloch

Van Hool C44Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-60 L845 RST was acquired in August ex-Rapson's Coaches.

MacDonald, Back

R609 CJS is a Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-62 which was new to this Lewis-based operator in September, presumably for use on the Inverness-Ullapool service.

McGill, Barrhead AA

This company is still a separate entity from Clydeside, and developments should therefore continue to be recorded separately for the moment.

Of all the vehicles which passed into Cowie Group ownership, Leyland National DYS 636T and AEC Routemaster VYJ 893 (VLT 89) have not been used, the former being in withdrawn condition and the latter apparently being for sale.

Rootes B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D D25 KKP and similar Reeve Burgess-bodied C707/8 JMB were transferred to this fleet in September from Clydeside where they had been numbered 236-8. All are now in full McGill livery.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard tow wagon TXA 114K, originally Alexander (Fife) FPE14, and Leyland Lynx LX2R11C15Z4S-B51F H733 HWK had both been transferred to sister company Crossville Wales by October, the latter now numbered SLC73.

Timetable revisions were effected to most of the McGill operation from 17 November. Services are now numbered, including 1 (Paisley-Auchenback), 4 (Paisley-Neilston), 5 (Paisley-Kilbarchan), and 6 (Paisley-Renfrew Ferry). 2 and 3 are believed to be the Barrhead town service and Auchenback-Glasgow respectively.

Several Clydeside double-deck buses are now being operated out of McGill's depot in Barrowhead for use on school contracts in East Renfrewshire. They had previously been operated from Clydeside's Johnstone depot.

McQueen, Garelochhead

PMT-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D J733 USF passed to Singh, Huddersfield in August.

Lowland has 10 Plaxton Pointer 2-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs. 225 (R225 GFS) waits at Stoneybank on service 141, one of four linked together which these buses run.

RICHARD WALTER

**Mackie, Alloa**

Two recent additions to this fleet are Van Hool C41F-bodied Volvo B10M-46 C190 FSU (ESK 880, C190 FSU ex-Long, Salisburgh) and Van Hool C49Ft-bodied DAF SB3000WS601 L557 EHD ex-Chester, Plymouth. They arrived in September and July respectively.

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger coach SL 8207 was re-registered B496 MFS in September.

Duple-bodied Volvo B58-56 FON 980V passed to Brown, Crawley in August.

Mairs, Aberdeen FB

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D 711 (FSU 335, D517 RCK) has been sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall for scrap while similar Alexander-bodied 743 (D120 NUS) has gone to Kirkpatrick, Banchory.

Mayne, Buckie

R500 GSM is a Berkhof-bodied MAN coach which was new in September, but further details are awaited. C55F-bodied DAF MB200DKFL600 B298 ESE was acquired from Smith, Keith in August and quickly re-registered OIW 5800. ACL-bodied Mercedes-Benz 410D L210 RST was sold to Crystals (dealer), Doncaster in August.

Melville, Kirriemuir

DSD 952V, a Seddon Pennine with Alexander T-type C49F body, was acquired in June ex-Williamson, East Kilbride. It was followed in July by two ex-military Wadham Stringer B39F-bodied Renault G13s, G486/7 VSR, the former of which had previously been registered 74 KH 29.

Reeve Burgess B23F-bodied Dodge S56 D131 LTA was burnt out by October.

Midland Bluebird FB

Further to last month's issue, it is reported that Leyland National XTJ 7W has been numbered 34, rather than 37. The latest repaints into Midland Bluebird FirstBus livery include Leyland Leopards 455/66, Scania L113CRLs 580/1, and Leyland Atlantean 720. Volvo B10M-58 1211 is now in SMT FirstBus livery.

Morrison, West Tarbert

H939 RUX is a Caetano C21F-bodied Toyota HDB30R acquired in March 1996 ex-Davies, Ellesmere but not reported until now.

NCP, Glasgow Airport

P848-50 YGB are a trio of Plaxton Beaver 2-bodied Mercedes-Benz O814Ds now being used by National Car Parks between the Airport Terminal Building and Abbotsinch Long Stay Car Park.

Newark, Kilmacolm

Reeve Burgess B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608Ds D93/7 VCC have been acquired from Scottish Travel, Port Glasgow.

Orion, Wemyss Bay

C518 DYM is an Iveco 49.10 with Robin Hood B21F bodywork acquired in September from Gillen, Port Glasgow while F695 OPA arrived in October and is similar but B23F and previously Stagecoach South 485.

Park, Hamilton

Van Hool C53F-bodied Scania K113CRBs N136-9 YMS were acquired in October from Clydeside Buses, where they were numbered 136-9. They continue to be used in Citylink colours and on the same Citylink service as before, Edinburgh-Gourock.

Mercedes-Benz minibuses RBZ 4245 (D520 RCK) and RBZ 5494 (D82 UVF) were returned to Stagecoach Glasgow in September when they were replaced by similar RBZ 5459 (D525 RCK) and RBZ 5498 (D108 NUS) which remained until the local services were withdrawn the following month.

Peace, Kirkwall

P229 DBS is a new ACL C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 814D which was added to this fleet about a year ago. SJ1 1631 (D410 BDP, 748 COF, D125 VRM) is a Bedford YNT with Plaxton C53F body acquired some time ago ex-Go West, Kings Lynn while E183 DBB is a Caetano C19F-bodied Toyota HB31R which has arrived from Tait, Newmachar.

Post Office

Further recent new postbus allocations to record comprise 15-seat LDV Convoy 6750068 (P815 RSC) at Dingwall reserve, although being used with only seven seats; 6750069 (P816 RSC) at Laide-Achnasheen, also downseated to seven; 6750070 (P867 RSC) at Perth reserve; 6750072 (P869 RSC) at Denny-Fintry; 6750073 (P870 RSC) at Aberfoyle-Inversnaid; 6750074 (P871 RSC) at Callander-Trossachs; 6750075 (P872 RSC) at Aberfoyle-Kinlochard; 6750076 (P497 OSC) at Elgol-Broadford; 6750081 (P873 RSC) at Pitlochry-Rannoch Station; 6750082 (P874 RSC) at Perth reserve; 6750083 (P875 RSC) at Criarlarich-Killin; and 6750084 (P877 RSC) at Killin-Callander. Ford Mondeo estate car 6760025 (P583 MSC) has been allocated to Gareloch-Redpoint.

Prentice, West Calder

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-61 HSB 957Y (969 JOK, NYS 52Y) was re-registered OUJ 969 in September.

Pringle, Bearsden

Willowbrook H45/33F-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68B/1R AFY 189X was acquired in October, having been with Stott, Oldham latterly.

Rapson, Brora

Two interesting additions to this fleet during the summer were ECW B43F-bodied Bristol LH6L LPT 767T and ECW DP27F-bodied Bristol LHS6L GTX 761W, previously numbered 11 and 14 respectively in the Cygnet, Darton fleet.

Rapsons Coaches RN

Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-60 L845 RST was sold to McColl, Balloch in August.

Rennie, Dunfermline

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans RUS 3267/730/1R were re-registered RSR 49/8R, RRD 141/2R respectively in September, while Alexander-bodied Ailsa KSD 99W was re-registered LJH 393W in October. The reason for these re-registrations is not known, but the Atlanteans are due for disposal shortly. Crystals-bodied Mercedes-Benz 711D N945 MGG was sold to Yule, Pitlochry in October.

Roadrunner, Gourock

D158 VRP is a Mercedes-Benz L608D with Alexander B20F bodywork acquired in September ex-Morris, Llanrug.

Rowe, Muirkirk

Caetano-bodied DAF SB3000DHS585 D518 WNV of the Tudhope fleet was re-registered VJI 9441 in September.

Scottish, Port Glasgow

Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608Ds D93/7 VCC have been sold to Newark, Kilmacolm while similar Alexander-bodied D950 UDY is now with Glen, Port Glasgow.

Slaemuir, Port Glasgow

A new addition to this fleet in October was R639 EYS, a Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 0814D.

Spencer, Leven

Further to the November issue, Duple Dominant B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard MUS 152P was not sold last July.

Stagecoach Glasgow ST

Mercedes-Benz minibuses 052 (RBZ 4245, D520 RCK) and 082 (RBZ 5494, D82 UFV) returned from loan to Park, Hamilton in September when they were replaced by similar 055 (RBZ 5459, D525 RCK) and 208 (RBZ 5498, D108 NUS). All those on loan to Park were presumably returned on 24 October when the East Kilbride local services ceased operation.

Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 038 (RBZ 3427), 052 (RBZ 4245), 054 (RBZ 4359), 230 (WDZ 6962) and Leyland Leopard 631 (WFS 147W) were transferred to Western Buses in September/October. In the opposite direction, Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 166 (UWP 105, XUF 535Y) arrived from Western Buses in September.

Strathay YT

New Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-62 coaches 451-3 arrived as expected in September and are being operated from Dundee depot in Citylink colours. Another addition in September was 156 (E538 VKY), an MCW Metrorider MF150/33 with B25F body previously Yorkshire Traction 538. It has been allocated to Forfar depot.

Travel Dundee NX

Ailsas 36/8, 44 have been repainted into dark blue and cream with Travel Dundee fleetnames.

Plaxton C49F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 248 (A8 TPT, H855 AHS) was re-registered H157 CSP in August before being sold to Lawson, Methven. Alexander-bodied Ailsas 2 (CSL 602V), 23/8, 30 (DSP 923/8/30V) were transferred to sister company Highland Country in November.

Weir, Clydebank

The recently acquired Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopards, NMS 576M and OSJ 605R, have both now been painted into a dark green and cream livery similar to the Eastern Scottish service bus colours of the 1970s.

Westerbus, Gairloch

The first news of this operator for a long time is that Caetano C49Dt-bodied Volvo B10M-61 LIB 7331 (C630 KDS) was acquired in July 1996 from Ross, Grantown-on-Spey.

Western ST

It is pleasing to be able to report that, in addition to the retention of the red A1 Service fleetnames on the blue buses in this fleet, a revised AA Buses fleetname in yellow in Stagecoach house style of lettering has been adopted for application to the green buses in the fleet. The first recipients of this were Leyland Nationals 766-8 and Dennis Dart 402. Furthermore, a new Western fleetname in red is to be applied to the corporate liveried buses and the first recipient of this welcome feature was Volvo B10M-55 590, followed by similar 570, Leyland Leopards 645/7/58, Leyland National 793 and recently acquired training buses 1039/40.

The first of the new Dennis Dart SLFs with Alexander ALX200 B37F bodywork for the AA Buses operation entered service in November as 462-6 (R462-6 LSO). They are in full AA green and cream livery with the revised AA Buses fleetnames, and the only really visible clue as to their Stagecoach ownership is their 'Super Low Floor Bus From Stagecoach' legend carried above the windows. Previously 14 of these buses were due but the current intention is to take only 12 in AA Buses colours.

103-5 (R103-5 LSO) are another three of the familiar Plaxton Interurban DP51F-bodied Volvo B10M-62s which were new in October and have been allocated to Ardrossan, Cumnock and Dumfries respectively.

Four other vehicles added to the fleet in October were 176/7/85/92 (G530-2/5 LWU), Plaxton Paramount 3500 C48Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-60s previously numbered 62-5 in the Midland Red South fleet. It is anticipated that these Expressliners will be refurbished as standard coaches by Plaxton and reseated C51F before entering service. Similar 174/5 reported last month will also be treated in this way and were re-registered WLT 874, VCS 376 respectively in October.

Leyland Leopards recently repainted out of Western livery into corporate stripes comprise 660/5/85/98, and Leyland National 793 has been treated similarly. In September Alexander-bodied Scania saloons 454/5 all lost their green and cream AA Buses livery in favour of all-over white, subsequently modified by the addition of red Clyde Coaster fleetnames for use on service 585

(Ayr-Greenock). At the end of October 453 appeared in full Clyde Coaster white and red livery in lieu of AA Buses green and cream, suggesting that unusual Jonckheere-bodied Scania saloon 450 may not survive long.

The arrival of the latest Plaxton Interurbans caused the entire open top fleet to be renumbered in October. Leyland/Daimler Fleetlines 101 (XSJ 656T), 102 (HDS 566H, 703 DYE, SMS 402H), 103 (GHV 948N), 104 (GHV 102N); Bristol VRT 105 (UWV 607S); and Leyland Leopard 106 (OSJ 636R) are now numbered 834-7/3, 636 respectively.

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger coaches 192 (9737 VC, C212 PPE) and 193 (A7 GGT, B72 OKV) were returned to Midland Red South on 22 October after being on loan from that company for a spell. Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 667 was loaned to Clyde Coast, Ardrossan in September but was returned before the end of that month, while similar 679 was loaned to Shuttle Buses, Kilwinning at the same time together with Dormobile-bodied Dodge S46 294. The latter was returned on 14 October.

Recent inter-company vehicle transfers comprise Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 166 (UWP 105, XUF 535Y) going to Stagecoach Glasgow in September; Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Fleetlines 858/61 (XSJ 658/61T), 871 (BCS 871T), 877 (ECS 877V) going to Cheltenham & Gloucester in October; and Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 171 (TSU 638, FKK 838Y) going to Bluebird Buses in October. In the opposite direction, Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 038 (RBZ 3427), 052 (RBZ 4245), 054 (RBZ 4359), 230 (WDZ 6962) and Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 631 (WFS 147W) were transferred from Stagecoach Glasgow in September/October, 052 being used as a crew transfer bus at Ardrossan depot.

MCW Metroriders 239/43 (F114/21 YVP) and 283-7/9 (F53/1/2, 63/4, 54 RFS) were sold to Houston Ramm (dealer), Sudden in October while former AA Buses Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLF 405 (N606 WND) was returned off lease to Cheshire Bus & Coach on 24 October.

Whitelaw, Stonehouse

Former demonstrator Plaxton Verde-bodied Volvo B10B-58 M875 NWK has now been repainted into full fleet livery ex-all-over white.

Whyte, Newmachar

R731 EGD is a Plaxton C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz which was new in August.

Wood, Edinburgh

This operator, trading as Village Link, introduced Sunday-only 'Pentland Drover' services on 1 December linking West Linton, Little Vantage and Hillend.

Yule, Pitlochry

N945 MGG, a Mercedes-Benz 711D with Crystals C25F coachwork, was purchased from Rennie, Dunfermline in October when Made to Measure-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D J281 RNE went to Western (dealer), Newbridge.

Group codes

AA	Arriva Passenger Services
FB	FirstBus
NX	National Express Group
SB	Strathclyde Buses Holdings
ST	Stagecoach
YT	Yorkshire Traction



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Rather surprisingly the three Northern Counties-bodied Dennis Falcons sold by Greater Manchester South did not go for scrap, despite their rarity and lack of success elsewhere; they are now running for Rennies. The last of three is A473 HNC. BILLY NICOL

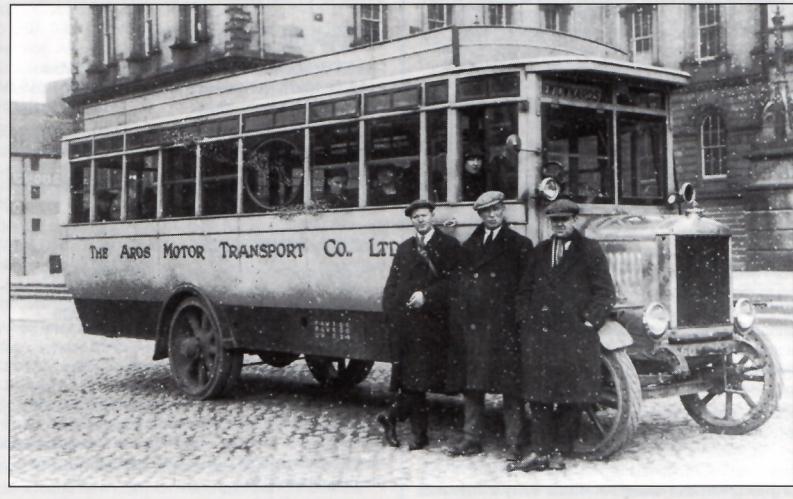
Reports on vehicles in Northern Ireland only should be sent, please, to: G. Irvine Millar, 54 Castlemore Avenue, Belfast BT6 9RG, and those for the Irish Republic to: John A. Doherty, 21 Whitebeam Avenue, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14.

The longest continuously-operated bus service in Ireland is Ulsterbus service 10 (Newtownards-Portaferry), which began 90 years ago. It was the first regular motorbus service in North Down and was inaugurated by a 12-seat Albion charabanc of the Irish Motor Transport Company, rather remarkably of Edinburgh.

To commemorate the 90th anniversary of the event Translink and the Ards Historical Society organised a commemorative run using the Flexibus 25-seat Mercedes charabanc, CZ 1988. Local historian Dr D. B. McNeill, who has a wealth of personal knowledge and has made a lifelong study of this early period, identified landmarks and subsequent bus owners along the route —primarily Reliance Motor Services and Ards Motor Transport Co — while Eddie Burnett, a conductor on the route during the war, recalled anecdotes of the 'mail' run and other personalities long associated with the route.

Barely a month later Dr McNeill's long-awaited history, 'Early Bus Services in Ulster', was launched at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum. This excellent publication, produced jointly by the Museum and the Institute of Irish Studies at Queens University, and co-authored by Mark Kennedy of the Museum, describes the origins and expansion of 260 bus owners in Ulster between 1907 and 1935 when almost all owners — 72 in number — were compulsorily acquired to form the Northern Ireland Road Transport Board.

Many early vehicles are described and illustrated, though the book is an eminently readable account of very wide general interest, even if it is not entirely free of errors, especially in reference to events outside the main period of the subject. Nonetheless captions and operator listings are meticulous and informative. There are 148 black and white illustrations, including a selection of maps, cartoons and contemporary advertisements which are well reproduced. The 160-page hardback book costs £17.95 and is readable and scholarly. It provides an excellent account which fills a major gap in published information about Ulster's bus operations.



IRISH MAJOR OPERATORS

Ulsterbus

Street violence flared again in Armagh and Lurgan, resulting in the destruction of Bristol REELL 2237 (ROI 2237), while two other buses were damaged. Replacements from the Citybus reserve fleet are Bristol REELLS 2462/8 (WOI 2462/8), probably on a

temporary basis. Leyland Tiger/Alexander 1391 (WXI 4391) has returned to service after accident repairs.

Wright Contour-bodied Leyland Tiger 538 (GXI 538) and DAF/Plaxton 697 (HIB 9482), the sole survivor from the former Sureline fleet, are surplus to requirements at the Driving School and have been delicensed. Leyland Leopard/Plaxton 561 (XOI 561) has been sold to Beattie, Hillsborough, for scrap.

Above right:
A Karrer of Ards
Motor Transport Co
Ltd outside Belfast
City Hall on the
Newtownards
service in the early
1920s. In the centre
of the group is John
Eadie who worked
as a driver with
each of the
successor operators
and retired from
Ulsterbus.

Right:
97 D 53196 is a
dual door Ikarus-
bodied DAF SB220
used by Flyer Bus
on car park work at
Dublin Airport.
CHRISTINA CURTIS



Citybus

A start has been made to transfer 'Skybreaker' roof advertising panels from Bristol REELLS in the reserve fleet on to later vehicles still in service. The first is now on 2570 (BXI 2570).

Dublin Bus

Volvo Olympians RV378-84 (97 D 378-83, 10384) have now been delivered, leaving only two outstanding, RV365, which was damaged in an accident on its delivery run, and RV385, which is confirmed as having special disabled access through centre door, and some seating modifications.

Single-deck GACs withdrawn comprise KC19 (ZSI 19) at Clontarf and KC26, 70 (ZSI 26, KZG 70) at Donnybrook, the latter pair replaced by KC92 from Summerhill and KC177 from Conyngham Road. Meanwhile Bombardier KD130/2 have been transferred from Phibsborough to Conyngham Road, whilst similar KD148 is reinstated there. Also reinstated is GAC KC4 at Summerhill.

Summerhill routes 13/13A were converted to CitySwift in mid-November, as a result of which routes 36/36A have been withdrawn. The new CitySwift route gains a Marion Square terminus and is routed northside only; a new 13B route to Rathgar, operated by single-deckers from Summerhill, replaces the south section. Route 59 (Dun Laoghaire-Killiney) has become CityImp route 159; Mercedes-Benz ME43 has been transferred from Phibsborough to cover it.

At Donnybrook, DAF SB220/Alexander AD60 has received the new blue/cream livery, whilst, surprisingly RH143 is now two-tone green (ex-all-over advertisement for AIB).

Confirmed orders for 1998 call for 60 Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Volvo Olympians.

Bus Eireann

More coaches ordered for 1998 are 35 Volvo B10Ms with Plaxton bodywork, to become VP71-105, a further 30 Caetano Algarve II-bodied B10Ms, to be VC118-47 and, as announced at Coach & Bus '97 in Birmingham, 25 Scania L94s with Irizar InterCentury bodywork, SI1-25. Deliveries will be spaced out until August.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Tigers TE3, 6, 17, 35/6 have been transferred from Tralee to Cork. Plaxton-bodied Tigers PL80/1 from Galway to Cork and Van Hool coaches from Waterford, CVH13/8, 20-2 to Broadstone, CVH6 to Limerick and EVH6 to Cork. Volvo/Caetanos VC9, 40 have been transferred from Ballina to Galway and Athlone respectively. GAC Citybus KC5 is in service at Cork while KC6 is still in store at Thurles. KR-type rural buses now in the school fleet are KS3, 50/1, 68, 94-6, 103/4 at Cork. KS59, 64/5, 83/4, 146/7 at Stranorlar; KS63/9, 70/2/4, 122 at Limerick and KS110 at Athlone, having been transferred from Limerick. KS48/9 have been transferred from Athlone to Longford. Withdrawals from the schools fleet are Leyland Leopard PSU5/4Rs MGS21 (21 IK) at Cork, MGS129/64/98 (129 IK etc) at Waterford and MDS201 (201 IK) at Stranorlar; Ford Transits SF120/4 at Tralee; Bedford SB5s SS678, 769 (678 Z, 769 ZL) at Longford, SS696 (696 Z) at Cork and VAS5s SS702/8/25/38/40/50 (702 ZI etc) at Cork and SS734 (734 ZI) at Stranorlar; Bedford YLQ BA10 (76 D 78, LOI 1865), BA17 (76 D 95, LOI 1837), BA18 (77 D 138, LOI 1855) at Cork and Volvo B57 VS29 (81 D 1482) at Cork.

IRISH INDEPENDENTS

Ards Tours, Newtownards

As anticipated a second Leyland Titan has joined this fleet, CUV 71V, like CUL 93V from Aintree Coach Hire, Bootle. This operator's ex-Western Scottish Dennis Dorchester/Plaxton coach has been sold to D. Burn of Millisle.

Boyne Valley Heritage

The Office of Public Works is running six Eurocoach-bodied Mercedes-Benz 814s, 97 MH 1279-84, on services to early Christian burial sites at Newgrange, Dowth and Knowth. The buses carry a blue, green and white livery.

Flyerbus

This operator of car park services at Dublin Airport has Ikarus-bodied DAF SB220s 97 D 50679, 52078, 53196.

Lough Swilly

The first of the ex-Clydeside Leyland Tigers to enter service is 402 (84 DL 2122, 54 CLT, A179 UGB). It is the first Lough Swilly vehicle ever to carry an overall advertisement, which is for Foyleside Shopping Centre. Ex-Clydeside Leyland Leopards re-registered are 397/8 (TSJ 51S, BSJ 903T), now 78 DL 662, 79 DL 634.

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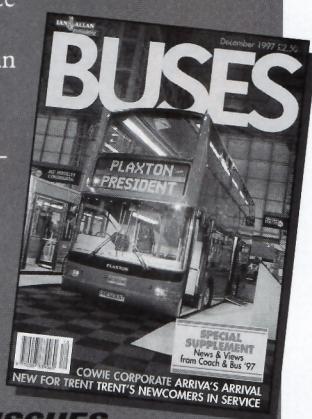
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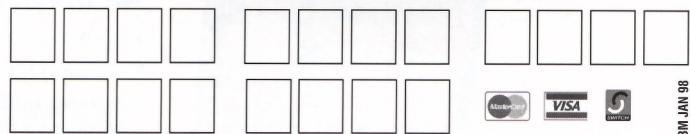
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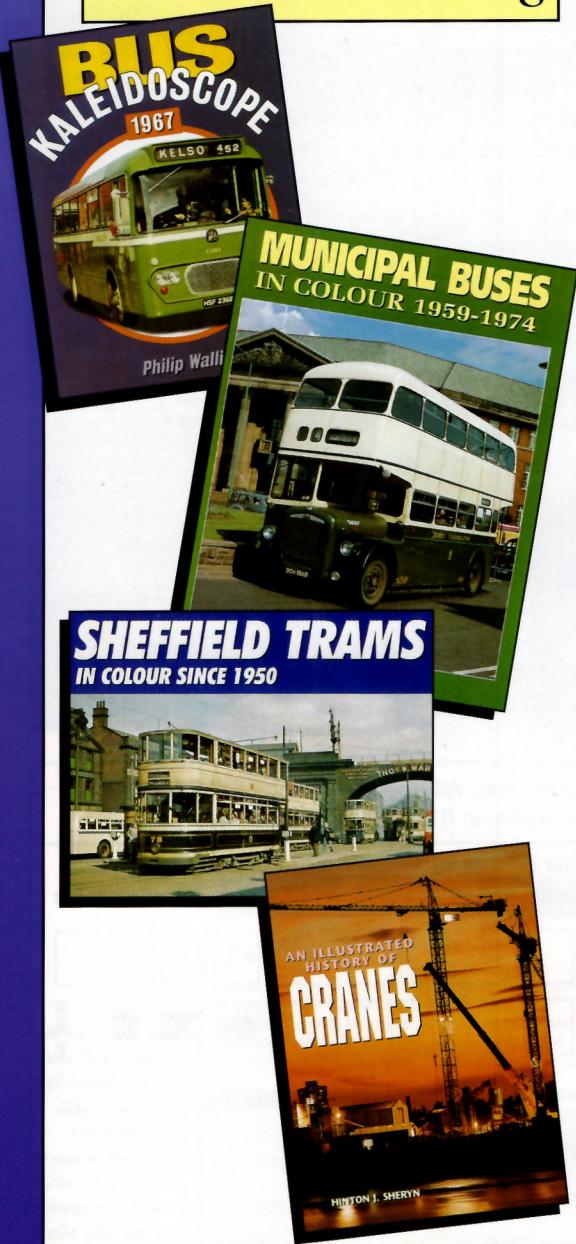
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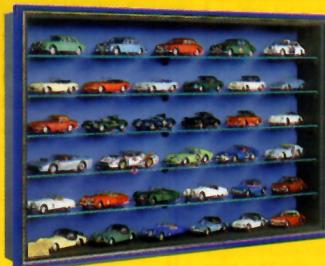
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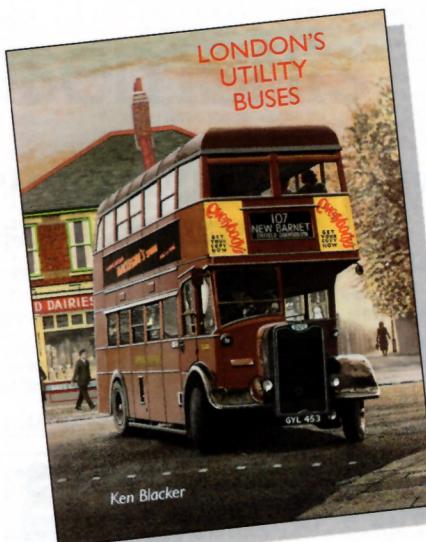
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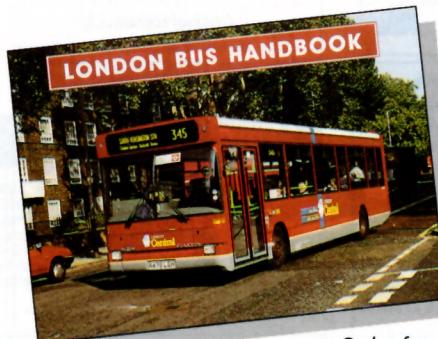


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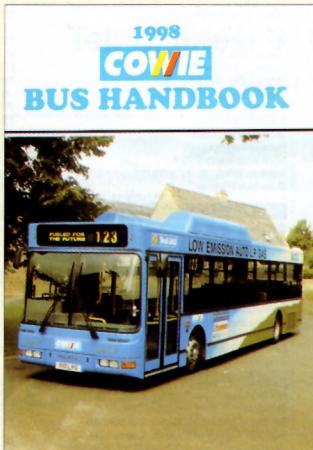
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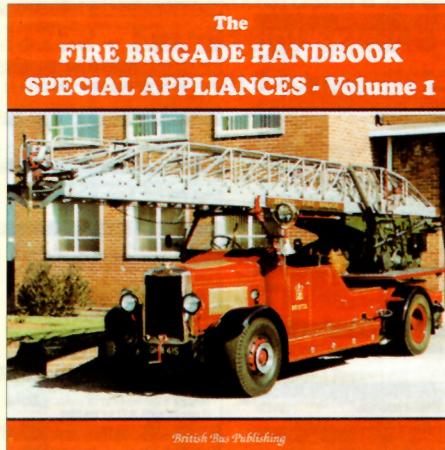
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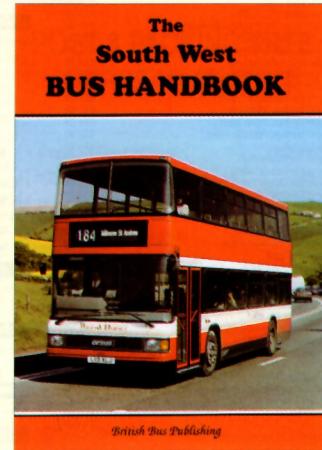


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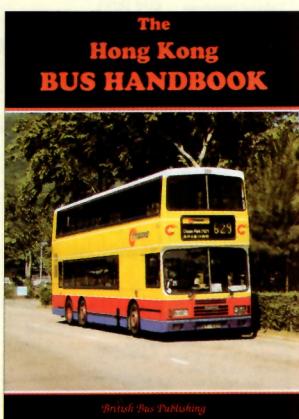
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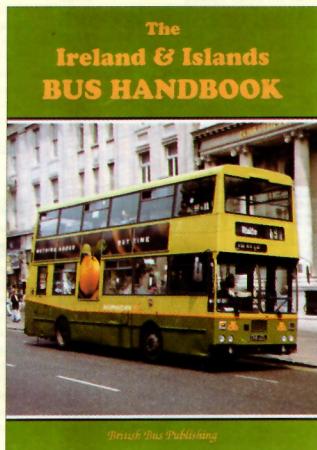
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42713	Van Hool Alizee Clarkes of London Jan £13.99 £11.99
42810	Dennis Dart Orpington Buses Feb £13.99 £11.99
STAGECOACH	
42714	Van Hool Alizee Eurolines Feb £13.99 £11.99
43302	Plaxton Premiere Express Shuttle (with poseable wheels) Mar £14.99 £12.99

GO-AHEAD GROUP	
42809	Dennis Dart VFM Jan £13.99 £11.99
STAGECOACH	
43301	Plaxton Premiere Oxford City Link (poseable wheels) Mar £14.99 £12.99

FIRST BUS	
43402	Plaxton Beaver Stagecoach Manchester Mar £12.99 £10.99
FOCUS ON WALES	
43108	Leyland Lynx Mk I Beeline Mar £13.99 £11.99

CELTIC COLLECTION	
42506	B Bedford OB with quarterlights (Loch Tay Trundler) Jan £12.99 £10.99
SPECIALS	
42715	Van Hool Alizee, with Air Conditioning Mar £12.99 £10.99

KITS	
95400	Bus Garage £6.99
CONNOISSEUR CLASSICS	
44901	Bus Station £6.99

CORGI 1st 1/2 YEAR RELEASES 1998	
16102	Scammell Highway Man Crane Southdown Feb £21.99 £18.99
35304	Bedford Val Coach Smiths Tours (Shearings) Mar £27.49 £22.99
35007	AFC Routemaster RM1818 London Transport Apr £29.99 £24.99
35008	AEC Routemaster Stagecoach Jun £29.99 £24.99

CORGI 2nd 1/2 YEAR 'OO' RELEASES 1997	
36501	Burlingham Seagull Coach & Morris Traveller Set, Bartons £24.99
35303	Bedford Val Coach, Selne £17.99
35101	AEC Routemaster, O/T, RM London Transport, Sightseeing Dec £17.99
31804	Bus Depot Kit £8.99

CONNOISSEUR COLLECTION	
36501	Burlingham Seagull Coach & Morris Traveller Set, Bartons £24.99
35303	Bedford Val Coach, Selne £17.99
35101	AEC Routemaster, O/T, RM London Transport, Sightseeing Dec £17.99
31804	Bus Depot Kit £8.99

2ND HALF YEAR AMERICAN RELEASES	
54604	GM 5303 Philadelphia Aug £23.49
55003	PCC Street Car St Louis Sept £23.49
54012	GM 4506 Greyhound Lines Dog & Target Sept £20.99
55006	PCC Street Car - Pacific Electric Sept £23.49

CORGI COLLECTION	
91760	London Routemaster Bus £5.99
32401	R/M Guide Friday £5.99
32301	London Routemaster Bus June £5.99
32601	Plaxton Coach Bluebird £10.99
32602	Plaxton Coach National Express £10.99

CORGI STOCK ITEMS	
33201	AEC Regal Finglands £13.49
33501	OB Tiffield Thunderbolt £13.49
34101	Burlingham Ribblesdale Batty Holt £10.99
34701	Karrier Trolleybus Nottingham £17.99
91706	Northern Superliner £5.25
96990	AEC Regal Southall Set £11.25
96995	Ian Allan Anniversary Set £12.99
97001	AEC Regent Potteries £5.45
97020	AEC Wye Valley £5.99
97078	Corkillo/Kastell OB Set £11.49
97340	Burlingham Seagull Trent £7.49
97821	Daimler Halfcab Swans £5.99
97824	Birmingham Fleetliner £11.25
97828	Rochdale Fleetliner £11.25
97829	Daimler Douglas £9.99
34907	Leyland Royal Tiger, Manchester Corporation £16.49
35005	AEC Routemaster RM 254 London Transport £22.99

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT	
53901	Yellow Coach Union Pacific £20.99
53904	Yellow Coach Lionel City Bus Lines £21.49
54001	GM4506 Surface Transportation £20.99
54002	GM4506 Madison Avenue £20.99
54003	GM4506 St Louis £20.99
54004	GM4507 New York £20.99
54005	GM4502 Public Service £20.99
54006	GM4507 Wabash Railway £21.49
54007	GM4502 Squarzeay Lionel Bus Lines £20.99
54101	GM4509 Greyhound Lines £20.99
54102	Red Arrow Lines Philadelphia £20.99
54103	Lionel City Coach Co £21.49
54401	Fishbowl Lionel City £20.99
54502	GM5301 Pennsylvania Railroad £23.99
98464	Yellow Coach Burlington Trailways £9.99
98465	Yellow Coach New Jersey £11.99
98467	Yellow Coach Chaplain £9.99
98469	Yellow Coach Greyhound £11.99
98470	Yellow Coach Silverside £11.99
98472	Yellow Coach WAC £11.99
98473	Yellow Coach Waves £11.99

PROPOSED EFE RELEASES	
December	
24304	BET 'Venturn'
24501	Alexander Atlantian C Newcastle
22704	Alexander Y Type B 'Highland'
14901	Leyland National 11 'York City Rider'
16516D	L Alantean 'Portsmouth'
16113	Leyland PD2 King Alfred'
15222	London Transport RM 'Circle Bar'
January 1998	
22507	Alexander Y Type 'West Riding'
16316	Bristol LS 'Eastern National'
19807	Daimler CVG 'LUT'
24306	B.E.T. 'Maidstone & District'
23703	Alexander Fleetline 'Bradford'
23308	RF 'Red London Transport Route 210'
11110DL	RT Stevensons;
24002	Bedford TK Box & Trailer 'BR Parcels'

EFE Stock List	
10902DL	Lord Rayleighs Farm £5.50
10903DL	AEC Tanker LPG £5.50
10905DL	AEC Box Van Welch's £5.50
12003DL	AEC Taylor Woodrow £5.50
12103	Hebble Cavalier Coach £7.99
12106DL	Harrington Valiant £5.50
12204DL	Orange Luxury Harrington £14.00
12305DL	Ellen Smith Harrington £6.75
13909DL	Bristol Lodekka Cambus £9.99
14202DL	Midland General Lodekka £14.00
14403	Leyland National United £9.75
15704DL	Plaxton Abbotts £4.99
15705DL	Plaxton Sheffield United £5.50
15901DL	Leicester Mercury £12.40
19804	Coventry Showbus Special £9.99
11007	AEC 8 Wheel Box Van Bouts £5.50
12106	Cavalier Valiant £4.99
12110	Cavalier Flights £9.99
12803	Atkinson Flatbed Henshalls £6.75
13101	Atkinson Dents Of Spennymoor £5.50
15704	Plaxton Abbotts £4.99
15705	Plaxton Sheffield United £5.50
15901	PD1 Leicester £9.75

LLEDO	
LAD1002	Lledo 15th Anniversary Display Cabinet of
DG15	Components £64.99
BC1006	Lledo Plinth London Bus Collection £31.99
DG 15037	Schweppes Regent Double Decker £4.25
DG 75005	Polo Mints Bristol LDG6 £4.25
SP49 (555)	Neals D/Decker £2.99
49019	MDM Tussauds £2.50
68006	7 UP £3.50

SEEROL

Seerol Buses Double Deck White Now Only £3.99



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AND MINIATURE MOTOR MUSEUM

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RELEASES FOR DEC 1997

1:76 Scale/00 gauge precision diecast models

IMPORTANT NOTICE: THE INTRODUCTION OF TWO EXCITING NEW SERIES FOR THE DEDICATED COLLECTOR.

The GROCERY SERIES and BREWERY SERIES are easily identifiable by their brightly coloured customised packaging, cream for the Grocery and green for the Brewery Series. Each series features approximately 15 models recreating authentic vehicles as used by companies in the brewing and grocery trades. The models will be produced in very restricted quantities, so be sure to place your orders early to avoid the disappointment of missing out.



24304 B.E.T. Style Bus. VENTURE

Bodied by Willowbrook, this Albion Aberdonian makes a welcome partner to the existing Venture Y-Type. Featuring the ornate chrome design on the front panel, 167 BUP, fleet number 203 is on route 55 to Rockwood Gardens.



24501 Alexander Atlantean. NEWCASTLE.

Displaying a new style front panel, the unique Newcastle livery is seen here on ABB 49B, fleet number 49, complimented by adverts for local beers. The famous Newcastle Ales and McEwan's Export adverts being applied directly onto the body sides, are sure to enhance the desirability of this model. On route 47 to Central Station, this vehicle will be in great demand.



22704 Alexander Y-Type. HIGHLAND

As perhaps is appropriate, Scottish companies always decorate their Y-Types in very attractive liveries. The popular Highland Omnibus Company were no exception with this stunning red and peacock blue combination. With the Highland eagle motif on its sides, HST 203N, fleet number T103 is on route 51 to Kyleakin and is set to be a much sought after model.

Grocery Series



22906 Bedford TK. WAGON WHEELS

Another striking and detailed livery release for the Grocery Series, this Bedford TK adds another famous brand name to the range. Points to note are the detailed printing of the wagon and horses on the sides which really helps to bring this model alive. HTX 680N, fleet number 619 will be available in limited numbers so an early order is recommended.



16113 Leyland PD2 Highbridge. KING ALFRED

The King Alfred fleet served the Winchester area for more than fifty years being unusual in that it was a privately owned company which ran a municipal service. The two tone green and cream buses have developed a strong following today and Exclusive First Editions are proud to present HAA 809 on route 11 to Winchester, displaying adverts for Marston's Ale and Vernon's Pools.



15622 AEC Routemaster. LONDON TRANSPORT

Typifying the last of London Transport's standard in service Routemasters at the beginning of the 'eighties, 336 CLT, RM1336, is on route 176 to Forest Hill, its garage plates WL 137 marking it as a Walworth vehicle. Our first Routemaster with the circle and bar emblem on its sides, makes a perfect partner to the similarly liveried RF from earlier in the year.



16516DL Leyland Atlantean. PORTSMOUTH

The popular Portsmouth fleet is again the focus of our De-Luxe range this month. 227 CRV, fleet number 227, is on route 3 from Cosham to South Parade Pier, displaying new adverts for Guernsey Toms and a local D.I.Y. merchants.



14901 Leyland National II. YORK CITY RIDER.

The Leyland National II has been greatly requested recently, in response we would like to present this short single door variation as used by York City Rider. LUA 314V, fleet number 1314, is on route 8A to Heslington. A point to note is that this National is devoid of the characteristic roof pod.

Keep up to date with all our model release information by joining our Subscription Service for an annual U.K. fee of £4.

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